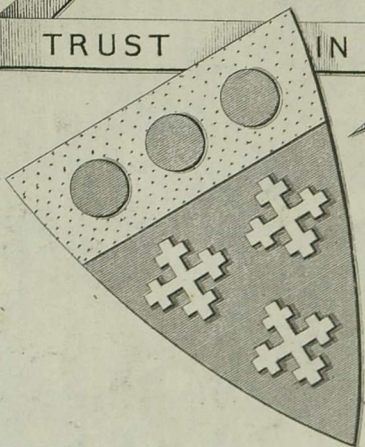
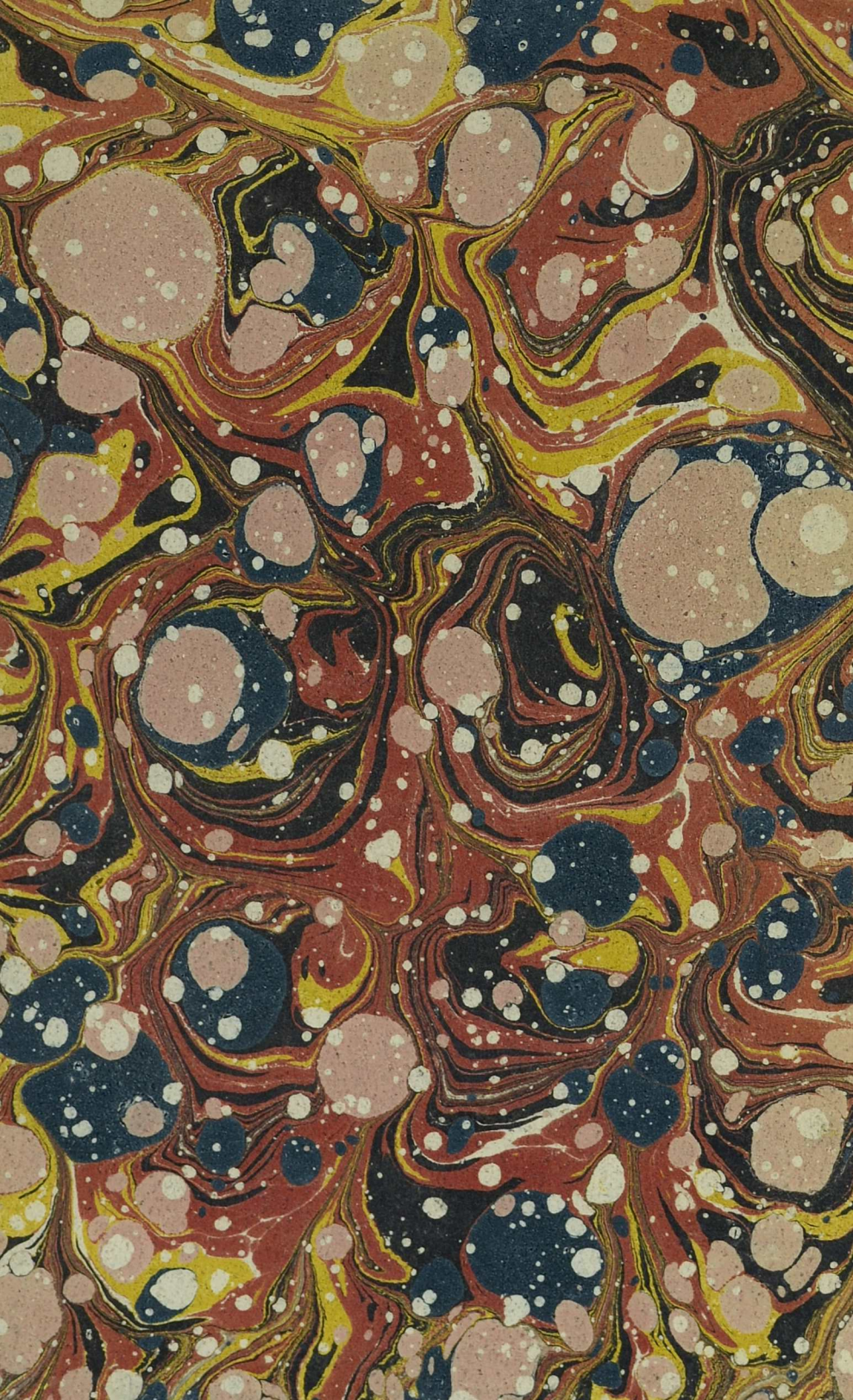




TRUST IN GOD.



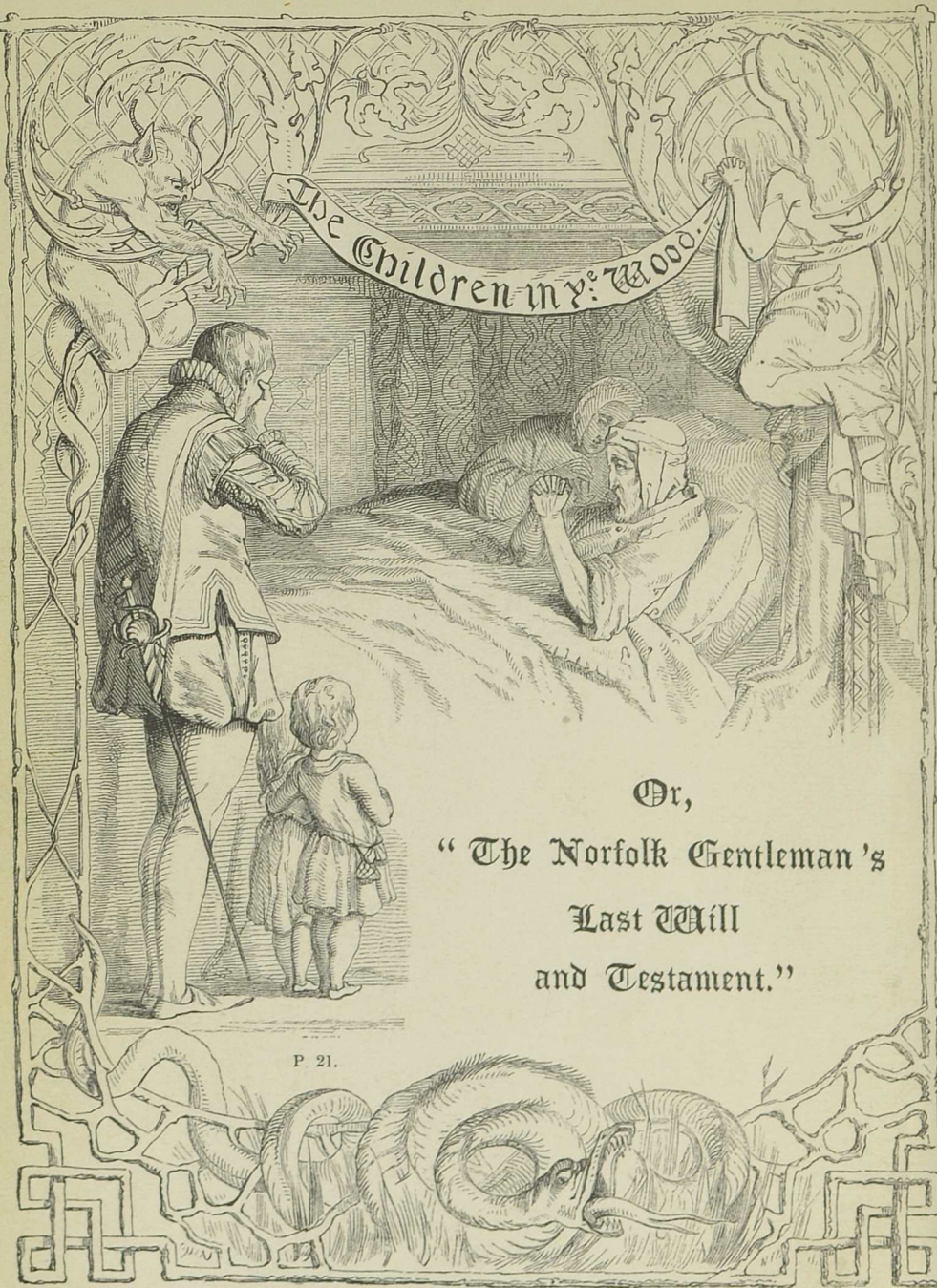
KERSHAW.



Ed. Mershaw

Coll: S. S. Train

Cantabrigienses



The Children in the Wood.

Or,
"The Norfolk Gentleman's
Last Will
and Testament."

P 21.

BALLADS

and

METRICAL TALES

Selected from

Percy, Ritson, Evans, Jamieson, Scott,

&c. &c.



LONDON:
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

To the Reader.

It is scarcely needful to disclaim anything like an antiquarian character for the present little work. It simply professes to be a Selection, within the compass of a pocket volume, of some of the more popular specimens of our Ballad Poetry; and as such it is hoped it may be acceptable to those who do not possess, or have not leisure for the study of the more extended collections from which the compilation has been made. It may be added, that those copies of the ballads have been followed which seemed on the whole best adapted for general perusal; and in some cases, where the matter seemed unnecessarily prolix, slight abridgements have been made; not, however, in such a way as to injure the effect of the piece.

The contents of the present volume are, with few exceptions, derived from British sources. Another little work, of a similar class, is intended to comprise translated specimens from the German and other continental languages.

LONDON,
January 1st, 1845.

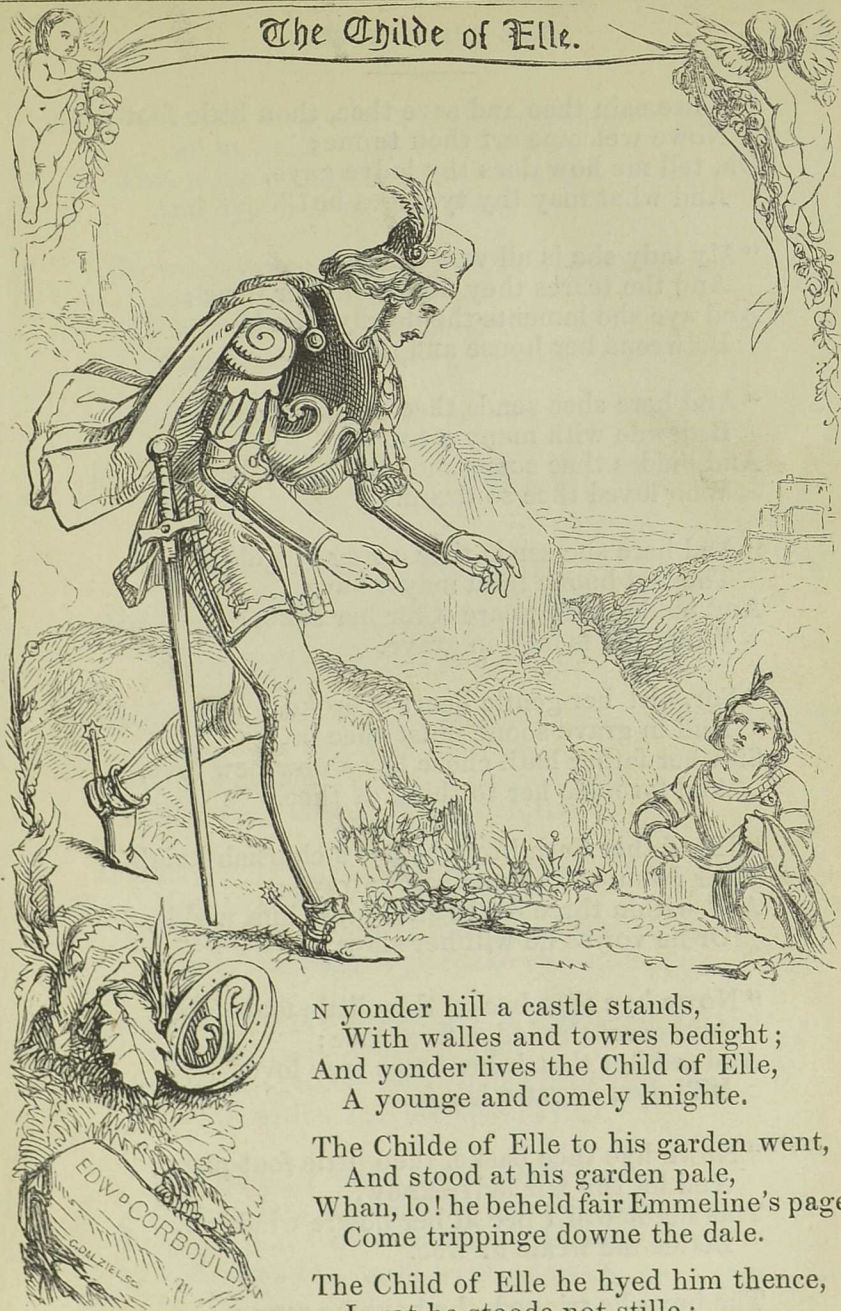
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Illustrations.

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THE CHILD OF ELLE	<i>E. Corbould.</i>
VALENTINE AND URSINE	<i>H. C. Selous.</i>
SIR LAUNCELOT	<i>J. Franklin.</i>
THE CHATSWORTH OUTLAW	<i>W. B. Scott.</i>
THE FORLORN MAIDEN	<i>F. R. Pickersgill.</i>
THE GRAY PALFREY	<i>W. B. Scott.</i>
THE FRIAR OF ORDERS GRAY	<i>W. B. Scott.</i>
GLENFINLAS	<i>W. B. Scott.</i>
LORD WILLIAM	<i>W. B. Scott.</i>

The Childe of Elle.



N yonder hill a castle stands,
With walles and towres bedight ;
And yonder lives the Childe of Elle,
A younge and comely knighte.

The Childe of Elle to his garden went,
And stood at his garden pale,
Whan, lo ! he beheld fair Emmeline's page
Come tripping downe the dale.

The Child of Elle he hyed him thence,
I wot he stooode not stille ;
And soone he mette faire Emmeline's page
Come climbing up the hille.

“ Nowe sain thee and save thee, thou little foot-page,
Nowe welcome art thou to me ;
Oh, tell me how does thy ladye gaye,
And what may thy tydinges be ? ”

“ My lady she is all woe begone,
And the teares they falle from her eyne ;
And aye she laments the deadlye feude
Betweene her house and thine.

“ And here shee sends thee a silken scarfe,
Bedewde with many a teare,
And biddes thee sometimes thinke on her,
Who loved thee so deare.

“ And here she sends thee a ring of golde,
The last boone thou mayst have,
And biddes thee weare it for her sake,
When she is layd in grave.

“ For, ah ! her gentle heart is broke,
And in grave soone must shee be,
Sith her father hath chose her a new new love,
And forbidde her to think of thee.

“ Her father hath brought her a churlish knighte,
Sir John, of the north countraye ;
And within three dayes shee must him wedde,
Or he vowes he will her slaye.”

“ Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And greet thy ladye from mee ;
And tell her that I, her owne true love,
Will dye, or sette her free.

“ Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And let thy fair ladye know,
This night will I bee at her bowre windowe,
Betide me weale or woe.”

The boye he tripped, the boye he ranne,
He neither stint ne stayd,
Until he came to fair Emmeline's bowre,
When kneeling down he sayd,

“ O ladye, I’ve been with thy own true love,
 And he greets thee well by mee;
 This night will he be at thy bowre-windowe,
 And dye or sette thee free.”

Nowe day was gone and night was come,
 And all were fast asleep;
 All save the ladye Emmeline,
 Who sate in our bowre to weepe :

And soon she heard her true love’s voice
 Lowe whispering at the walle;
 KNIGHT.—“ Awake, awake, my deare ladye,
 ’Tis I, thy true love call.

“ Awake, awake, my ladye deare,
 Come, mount this faire palfraye;
 This ladder of ropes will lette thee downe,
 Ile carrye thee hence awaye.”

EMMELINE.—“ Nowe nay, nowe nay, thou gentle knighte,
 Nowe nay, this may not bee;
 For aye should I lose my maiden fame,
 If alone I should wend with thee.”

KNIGHT.—“ O ladye, thou with a knighte so true
 Mayste safelye wend alone;
 To my ladye mother I wille thee bringe,
 Where marriage shall make us one.”

EMMELINE.—“ My father he is a baron bolde,
 Of lyneage proude and hye;
 And what would he saye if his daughter
 Awaye with a knighte should fly?

“ Ah! well I wot, he never would rest,
 Nor his meate should do him no goode,
 Until he had slain thee, Childe of Elle,
 And seene thy deare heart’s bloode.”

KNIGHT.—“ O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,
 And a little space him fro,
 I would not care for thy cruel father,
 Nor the worst that he could doe.

“ O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,
 And once without this walle,
 I would not care for thy cruel father,
 Nor the worst that might befall.”

Faire Emmeline sighed, faire Emmeline wept,
 And aye her heart was woe :
 At length he seized her lilly-white hand,
 And downe the ladder he drewe :

And thrice he clasped her to his breaste,
 And kist her tenderlie :
 The teares that fell from her fair eyes
 Ranne like the fountayne free.

He mounted himself on his stede so talle,
 And her on a fair palfraye,
 And slung his bugle about his necke,
 And roundlye they rode awaye.

All this beheard her owne damselle,
 In her bed whereas shee ley ;
 Quoth shee, “ My lord shall knowe of this,
 So I shall have golde and fee.

“ Awake, awake, thou baron bold !
 Awake, my noble dame !
 Your daughter is fledde with the Childe of Elle,
 To do the deed of shame.”

The baron he woke, the baron he rose,
 And called his merye men all :
 “ And come thou forth, Sir John, the knighte,
 Thy ladye is carried to thrall.”

Faire Emmeline scant had ridden a mile,
 A mile forth of the towne,
 When she was aware of her father's men
 Come galloping over the downe :

And foremost came the carlish knighte,
 Sir John of the north countraye :
 “ Nowe stop, nowe stop, thou false tratoure,
 Nor carry that ladye awaye.

“ For she is come of hye lineage,
And was of a ladye borne ;
And ill it beseems thee—a false churl’s sonne,
To carry her hence to scorne.”

“ Nowe loud thou lvest, Sir John the knighte,
Nowe thou doest lye of mee ;
A knighte me bred, and a ladye me bore,
Soe never did none by thee.

“ But light nowe downe, my ladye faire,
Light downe, and hold my steed ;
While I and this discourteous knighte
Do try this arduous deede.

“ But light nowe downe, my deare ladye,
Light downe, and hold my horse ;
While I and this discourteous knighte
Do trye our valour’s force.”

Fair Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe,
While ’twixt her love and the carlish knighte
Past many a baneful blowe.

The Child of Elle hee fought soe well,
As his weapon he waved amaine,
That soone he had slaine the carlish knighte
And laid him upon the plaine.

And nowe the baron and all his men
Full fast approached nye :
Ah, what may ladye Emmeline doe ?
’Twere nowe no boote to flye.

Her lover he put his horne to his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill,
And soone he saw his own merry men
Come ryding over the hill.

“ Nowe hold thy hand, thou bold baron,
I pray thee hold thy hand,
Nor ruthless rend two gentle hearts
Fast knit in true love’s band.

“Thy daughter I have dearly loved,
Full long and many a day;
But with such love as holy kirke
Hath freelye said wee may.

“O give consent shee may be mine,
And bless a faithfull paire :
My lands and livings are not small,
My house and lineage faire :

“My mother she was an earl’s daughter,
And a noble knighte my sire.”
The baron he frown’d, and turn’d away
With mickle dole and ire.

Fair Emmeline sigh’d, fair Emmeline wept,
And did all trembling stand :
At length she sprang upon her knee,
And held his lifted hand.

“Pardon, my lorde and father deare,
This faire younge knighte and mee :
Trust me, but for the carlish knighte,
I never had fled from thee.

“Oft have you called your Emmeline
Your darling and your joye ;
O! let not, then, your harsh resolves
Your Emmeline destroye.”

The baron he stroakt his dark-brown cheeke,
And turned his heade asyde,
To wipe away the starting teare,
He proudly strave to hyde.

In deepe revolving thought he stode,
And mused a little space ;
Then raised faire Emmeline from the grounde,
With many a fond embrace.

“Here, take her, Child of Elle,” he sayd,
And gave her lillye white hand ;—
“Here, take my deare and only child,
And with her half my land.

“Thy father once mine honour wrong’d
In days of youthful pride—
Do thou the injurys repayre,
In fondness for thy bride :

And as thou love her, and hold her deare,
Heaven prosper thee and thine !
And now my blessing wend wi’ thee,
My lovely Emmeline !”

CHEVY-CHACE.

God prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safetyes all ;
A woeful hunting once there did
In Chevy-Chace befall.

To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Erle Percy took his way ;
The child may rue that is unborne,
The hunting of that day.

The stout Erle of Northumberland
A vow he once did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer days to take ;

The cheefest harts in Chevy-Chace
To kill and beare away.
These tydings to Erle Douglas came,
In Scotland where he lay :

Who sent Erle Percy present word,
He wold prevent his sport.
The English Erle, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort,

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold ;
 All chosen men of might,
 Who knew full well in time of neede
 To ayme their shafts arright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran,
 To chase the fallow deere :
 On Munday they began to hunt,
 When day-light did appeare ;

And long before high noone they had
 An hundred fat buckes slaine ;
 Then having dined, the drovyers went
 To rouze the deere againe.

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
 Well able to endure ;
 And all their reare, with speciall care,
 That day was guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
 The nimble deere to take,
 That with their cryes the hills and dales
 An echo shrill did make.

Lord Percy to the quarry went,
 To view the slaughter'd deere ;
 Quoth he, " Erle Douglas promised
 This day to meet me heere :

" But if I thought he wold not come,
 Noe longer wold I stay."
 With that, a brave younge gentleman
 Thus to the Erle did say :

" Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
 His men in armour bright ;
 Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
 All marching in our sight ;

All men of pleasant Tivydale,
 Fast by the river Tweede :"
 " Then cease your sports," Erle Percy said,
 " And take your bowes with speede :

“ And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance;
For never was there champion yett,
In Scotland or in France,

“ That ever did on horsebacke come,
But if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spere.”

Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

“ Show me,” sayd hee, “ whose men you bee,
That hunt soe boldly heere,
That, without my consent, do chase
And kill my fallow-deere.”

The first man that did answer make,
Was noble Percy he;
Who sayd, “ Wee list not to declare,
Nor show whose men wee bee :

“ Yet will we spend our deerest blood,
Thy cheefest harts to slay.”
Then Douglas swore a solemn oathe,
And thus in rage did say,—

“ Ere thus I will out-braved bee,
One of us two shall dye:
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Percy, soe am I.

“ But trust me, Percy, pittye it were,
And great offence, to kill
Any of these our guiltlesse men,
For they have done no ill.

“ Let thou and I the battell trye,
And set our men aside.”
“ Shame on the man,” Erle Percy sayd,
“ By whome this is denyed.”

Then stept a gallant squier forth,
Witherington was his name,
Who said, "I wold not have it told
To Henry our king for shame,

"That ere my captain fought on foote,
And I stood looking on.
You two bee erles," quo' Witherington,
"And I a squier alone :

"Ile doe the best that doe I may,
While I have power to stand :
While I have power to weeld my sword,
Ile fight with heart and hand."

Our English archers bent their bowes,
Their hearts were good and trew ;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew.

Yet bides Erle Douglas on the bent,
As chieftain stout and good ;
As valiant captain, all unmov'd
The shock he firmly stood.

His host he parted had in three,
As leader ware and tried ;
And soon his spearmen on their foes
Bare down on every side.

Throughout the English archery
They dealt full many a wound :
But still our valiant Englishmen
All firmly kept their ground :

And throwing strait their bowes away,
They grasp'd their swords so bright :
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower
On shields and helmets light.

They closed full fast on everye side,
Noe slacknes there was found ;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.

Alack! it was a grief to see,
How each one chose his spere,
And how the blood out of their brests
Did gush like water cleere.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might :
Like lyons wode, they layd on lode,
And made a cruell fight :

They fought untill they both did sweat,
With swords of tempered steele ;
Until the blood, like drops of rain,
They trickling downe did feele.

“ Yeeld thee, Lord Percy,” Douglas sayd ;
“ In faith I will thee bringe,
Where thou shalt high advanced bee,
By James our Scottish king :

“ Thy ransome I will freely give,
And this report of thee,
Thou art the most courageous knight,
That ever I did see.”

“ Noe, Douglas,” quoth Erle Percy then,
“ Thy proffer I doe scorne ;
I will not yeelde to any Scott,
That ever yett was borne.”

With that there came an arrow keene
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Erle Douglas to the heart,
A deepe and deadlye blow :

Who never spake more words than these,
“ Fight on, my merry men all ;
For why, my life is at an end ;
Lord Percy sees my fall.”

Then leaving life, Earl Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand ;
And said, “ Erle Douglas, for thy life
Wold I had lost my land.

“ Ah me ! my verry heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake ;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance did never take.”

A knight amongst the Scotts there was,
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Erle Percy :

Sir Hugh Montgomery was he call'd,
Who, with a spere full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight :

And past the English archers all,
Without a dread or feare ;
And through Erle Percy's body then
He thrust his hateful spere ;

With such vehement force and might
He did his body gore,
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard, and more.

So thus did both these nobles dye,
Whose courage none could staine :
An English archer then perceived
The noble erle was slaine ;

He had a bow bent in his hand,
Made of a trusty tree ;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
To the hard head haled he :

Against Sir Hugh Montgomery
So right the shaft he sett ;
The grey goose wing that was thereon
In his heart's bloode was wett.

This fight did last from breake of day,
Till setting of the sunne ;
For when they rung the evening-bell,
The battle scarce was done.

With stout Erle Percy, there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Ratchiffe, and Sir John,
Sir James, the bold barron.

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine,
Whose prowess did surmount.

For Witherington my heart is woe,
That ever he slaine shold be :
For when his legs were hewn in two,
He knelt and fought on his knee.

And with Erle Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Montgomery,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld
One foot wold never flee.

Sir Charles Murray of Ratchiffe, too,
His sister's sonne was hee ;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,
But saved he cold not bee.

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
Did with Erle Douglas dye ;
Of twenty hundred Scottish speres,
Scarce fifty-five did flye.

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen,
Went home but fifty-three ;
The rest in Chevy-Chace were slaine,
Under the greene woode tree.

Next day did many widdowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle :
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle.

Their bodyes, bathed in purple blood,
They bore with them away :
They kist them dead a thousand times,
Ere they were cladd in clay.

The news was brought to Eddenborrow,
 Where Scotland's king did raigne,
 That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
 Was with an arrow slaine :

“ O heavy news,” King James did say,
 “ Scotland can witness bee,
 I have not any captaine more
 Of such account as hee.”

Like tydings to King Henry came,
 Within as short a space,
 That Percy of Northumberland
 Was slaine in Chevy-Chace :

“ Now by my faith,” said then our king,
 “ Sith 't will noe better bee ;
 I trust I have, within my realme,
 Five hundred as good as hee :

“ Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say,
 But I will vengeance take :
 I'll be revenged on them all,
 For brave Erle Percy's sake.”

This vow full well the king perform'd
 After, at Humbledowne ;
 In one day, fifty knights were slayne,
 With lords of high renowne :

And of the rest, of small account,
 Did many hundreds dye.
 Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chace,
 Made by the Erle Percy.

God save the king, and bless this land
 With plentye, joy, and peace ;
 And grant, henceforth, that foule debate
 'Twixt noblemen may cease.

THE RED-CROSS KNIGHT.

“ BLOW, warder, blow thy sounding horn,
 And thy banner wave on high ;
 For the Christians have fought in the Holy Land,
 And have won the victory.”

Loud, loud the warder blew his horn,
 And his banner waved on high ;
 Let the mass be sung, and the bells be rung,
 And the feast eat merrily.

The warder look'd from his tower on high,
 As far as he could see :
 “ I see a bold knight, and by his red cross,
 He comes from the east countree.”

Then loud the warder blew his horn,
 And call'd till he was hoarse :
 “ I see a bold knight, and on his shield bright
 He beareth a flaming cross.”

Then down the lord of the castle came,
 The Red-Cross Knight to meet,
 And when the Red-Cross Knight he espied,
 Right loving he did him greet.

“ Thou'rt welcome here, dear Red-Cross Knight,
 For thy fame's well known to me ;
 And the mass shall be sung and the bells shall be rung,
 And we'll feast right merrily.”

“ Oh, I am come from the Holy Land,
 Where saints did live and die ;
 Behold the device I bear on my shield,
 The Red-Cross Knight am I !

“ And we have fought in the Holy Land,
 And we've won the victory ;
 For with valiant might did the Christians fight,
 And made the proud Pagans fly.”

“Thou’rt welcome here, dear Red-Cross Knight,
Come, lay thy armour by;
And for the good tidings thou dost bring,
We’ll feast us merrily.

“For all in my castle shall rejoice
That we’ve won the victory;
And the mass shall be sung and the bells shall be rung,
And the feast eat merrily.”

“Oh, I cannot stay,” cried the Red-Cross Knight,
“But must go to my own countree,
Where manors and castles will be my reward,
And all for my bravery.”

“Oh say not so, thou Red-Cross Knight,
But if you’ll bide with me,
With manors so wide and castles beside
I’ll honour thy bravery.”

“I cannot stay,” cried the Red-Cross Knight,
“Nor can I bide with thee,
But I must haste to my king and his knights
Who are waiting to feast with me.”

“Oh say not so, thou Red-Cross Knight,
But if you’ll stay with me,
With feast and with dance—with tourney and lance
We’ll honour thy bravery.”

“I cannot stay,” cried the Red-Cross Knight,
“Nor can I feast with thee,
But I must haste to a pleasant bower
Where a lady’s waiting for me.”

“Oh say not so, dear Red-Cross Knight,
Nor heed that fond lady,
For she can’t compare to my daughter fair,
And she shall wed with thee.”

And now the lute’s sweet silver sound
Re-echoed through the hall,
And in that lord’s fair daughter came
With her ladies clad in pall.

The lady was deckt in costly robes,
And shone as bright as day,
And with courtesy sweet the Knight she did greet,
And pressed him for to stay.

“ Right welcome, brave Sir Red-Cross Knight,
Right welcome unto me ;
And here long time I hope thou’lt stay,
And bear us company.”

“ It grieves me much, thou lady fair,
That here I cannot stay,
For a beauteous lady is waiting for me,
Whom I’ve not seen many a day.”

And as the lady pressed the Knight
With her attendants all,
Oh, then bespake a pilgrim youth,
As he stood in the hall.

“ Now, Heaven thee save, good Red-Cross Knight,
I’m come from the north countree,
Where a lady is laid all in her sick bed,
And evermore calls for thee.”

“ Alas! alas! thou pilgrim boy,
Sad news thou tellest me,
Now I must ride full hastily
To comfort that dear lady.”

“ Oh, heed him not,” the lady cried,
“ But send a page to see,
While the mass is sung and the bells are rung,
And we feast merrily.”

Again bespake the pilgrim boy,
“ Ye need not send to see,
For know, Sir Knight, that lady’s dead,
And died for love of thee.”

Oh, then the Red-Cross Knight was pale,
And not a word could say,
But his heart did swell, and his tears down fell,
And he almost swooned away.

“Now fie on thee, thou weakly Knight,
To weep for a lady dead;
Were I a noble Knight like thee,
I would find another to wed.

“So come, cheer up, and comfort thy heart,
And be good company,
While the mass is sung and the bells are rung,
And we feast merrily.”

In vain that courtly lady strove
The sorrowing Knight to cheer;
Each word he answered with a groan,
Each soothing with a tear.

“And now farewell, thou noble lord,
And farewell, lady fair,
In pleasure and joy your hours employ,
Nor think of my despair.”

“And where is her grave,” cried the Red-Cross Knight,
“The grave where she doth lay?”
“Oh, I know well,” cried the pilgrim boy,
“And I’ll show thee the way.”

“I’m glad I’ve found thee, pilgrim boy,
And thou shalt go with me,
And thou shalt guide to my lady’s grave,
And great thy reward shall be.”

Again he sighed and wept forlorn,
For his lady that was dead;
“Lady, how sad thy wedding tide,
How cold thy bridal bed!”

Thus the Red-Cross Knight complained and sighed,
While all around did cry;
“Let the minstrels sing, and the bells yring,
And the feast eat merrily.”

And now the gentle moon around
Her silver lustre shed,
Brightened each current, wall, and tower,
And distant mountain’s head.

By whose sweet light the Knight his way
Hath ta'en tho' not with joy,
And with him goes on mounted steed,
The faithful pilgrim-boy.

Oh fast they sped, to reach the dead,
And few the words they spoke;
Save when the passing convent-bell
Fresh tears and sighs awoke.

Save when at midnight, o'er the wold,
The priests did bend their way,
With taper bright, and holy light,
For some sinful soul to pray.

Then louder wail'd the Knight; and rued
His fortune, to be torn
From a maid as fair, and true, and good
As ever yet was born.

Now slower sped that pilgrim boy,
And rein'd his prancing steed,
Some sudden pang had seized his heart,
So form'd for gentle deed.

“Why art thou pale, thou pilgrim boy?”
The Knight all wond'ring cried;
“Why dost thou pant, thou pilgrim boy,
When I am by thy side?”

The Knight he ran and clasped the youth,
And ope'd his pilgrim's vest,
And, lo! it was his lady fair,
His lady dear he prest.

“Grieve not for me, my faithful Knight,”
The lady faint did cry;
“I'm well content, my faithful Knight,
Tho' in thy arms I die.”

“As a pilgrim boy, I've followed thee,
In truth full cheerfully,
Resolved, if thou shouldst come to ill,
Dear Knight, to die with thee.”

“Nay, Heaven forfend,” the Knight replied,
And rather grant thee grace
To live for him;—now, oh how blest,
Who gazes on thy face!”

But, see! a hostel by the road,
In time of need they spy;
And there his true love he hath led
To gain fresh strength or die.

And many a cordial quick they brought
To cheer her, from their hoard;
But, quicker than aught else, his smiles
That lady’s heart restored.

On palfrey now and prancing steed
They sped right gaily on;
Oh never on fairer knight and maid
The rising sunbeams shone!

And blest was he, that Red-Cross Knight
To find his sorrows o’er;
And her, his long-lost love and life,
Never to leave him more.

Castles and manors wide were given
To that Knight, so true and bold,
And the King and his Court, made merry, merry, sport,
O’er their cups of pearl and gold.

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

Now ponder well, you parents deare,
These wordes which I shall write;
A doleful story you shall heare,
In time brought forth to light.
A gentleman of good account
In Norfolk dwelt of late,
Whose wealth and riches did surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was, and like to dye,
 No helpe his life could save;
 His wife by him as sicke did lye,
 And both possest one grave.
 No love between these two was lost,
 Each was to other kinde,
 In love they lived, in love they dyed,
 And left two babes behinde :

The one a fine and pretty boy,
 Not passing three yeares olde ;
 The other a girl more young than he,
 And made in beautye's molde.
 The father left his little son,
 As plainlye doth appeare,
 When he to perfect age should come,
 Three hundred pounds a yeare.

And to his little daughter Jane,
 Two hundred poundes in gold,
 To be paid downe on marriage-day,
 Which might not be controll'd :
 But if the children chance to dye,
 Ere they to age should come,
 Their uncle should possess their wealth ;
 For so the will did run.

" Now, brother," said the dying man,
 " Look to my children deare ;
 Be good unto my boy and girl,
 No friendes else have they here :
 To God and you I do commend
 My children night and day ;
 A little while be sure we have
 Within this world to staye.

" You must be father and mother both,
 And uncle all in one ;
 God knowes what will become of them,
 When I am dead and gone."
 With that bespake their mother deare,
 " O brother kinde," quoth shee,
 " You are the man must bring my babes
 To wealth or miserie :

"If you do keep them carefully,
 Then God will you reward;
 If otherwise you seem to deal,
 God will your deedes regard."
 With lippes as cold as any stone,
 They kist the children small:
 "God bless you both, my children deare!"
 With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then their brother spoke
 To this sick couple there:
 "The keeping of your children deare,
 Sweet sister, do not feare:
 God never prosper me nor mine,
 Nor ought else that I have,
 If I do wrong your children deare,
 When you are layd in grave."

Their parents being dead and gone,
 The children home he takes,
 And brings them both unto his house,
 Where much of them he makes.
 He had not kept these pretty babes
 A twelvemonth and a daye,
 But, for their wealth, he did devise
 To make them both awaye.

He bargain'd with two ruffians rude,
 Which were of furious mood,
 That they should take the children young,
 And slay them in a wood.
 He told his wife, and all he had,
 He would the children send
 To be brought up in faire Londòn,
 With one that was his friend.

Away then went the pretty babes,
 Rejoycing at that tide,
 Rejoycing with a merry minde,
 They should on cock-horse ride.
 They prate and prattle pleasantly,
 As they rode on the waye,
 To those that should their butchers be,
 And work their lives' decaye:

So that the pretty speeche they had,
Made murtherers' heart relent:
And they that tooke the deed to do,
Full sore they did repent.
Yet one of them, more hard of heart,
Did vowe to do his charge,
Because the wretch that hired him
Had paid him very large.

The other would not agree thereto,
So here they fell at strife;
With one another they did fight,
About the children's life:
And he that was of mildest mood
Did slaye the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood;
Where babes did quake for feare!

He took the children by the hand,
When teares stood in their eye,
And bade them come and go with him,
And look they did not crye:
And two long miles he ledd them thus,
While they for bread complaine:
"Stay here," quoth he, "I'll bring ye bread,
When I do come againe."

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and downe;
But never more they sawe the man
Approaching from the town;
Their prettye lippes, with black-berries,
Were all besmear'd and dyed,
And when they sawe the darksome night,
They sat them downe and cryed.

Thus wandered these two pretty babes,
Till deathe did end their grief,
In one another's armes they dyed,
As babes wanting relief:
No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives,
Till robin-red-breast painfully
Did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrathe of God
Upon their uncle fell ;
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house,
His conscience felt an hell :
His barnes were fired, his goods consumed,
His landes were barren made,
His cattle dyed within the field,
And nothing with him stayd.

And in the voyage of Portugal
Two of his sonnes did dye ;
And, to conclude, himself was brought
Unto much miserye :
He pawn'd and mortgaged all his land
Ere seven years came about ;
And now at length this wicked act
Did by this meanes come out :

The fellowe, that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judged to dye,
As was God's blessed will :
Who did confess the very truth,
The which is here exprest ;
Their uncle dyed while he for debt
Did long in prison rest.

All you that be executors,
And overseers eke,
Of children that be fatherless,
And infants mild and meek ;
Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such like miserye
Your wicked minds requite.

THE TWA BROTHERS.¹

THERE were twa brothers at the scule,
 And when they got awa'—
 It's "Will ye play at the stane-chucking,
 Or will ye play at the ba',
 Or will ye gae up to yon hill head,
 And there we'll warsell a fa'?"

JOHN.—"I winna play at the stane-chucking,
 Nor will I play at the ba',
 But I'll gae up to yon bonnie green hill,
 And there we'll warsell a fa'."

They warsled up, they warsled down,
 Till John fell to the ground;
 A dirk fell out of William's pouch,
 And gave John a deadly wound.

JOHN.—"O lift me up upon your back,
 Take me to yon well fair;
 And wash my bluidy wounds o'er and o'er,
 And they'll ne'er bleed nae mair."

He's lifted his brother upon his back,
 Ta'en him to yon well fair;
 He's wash'd his bluidy wounds o'er and o'er,
 But they bleed ay mair and mair.

"Tak ye aff my Holland sark,
 And rive it gair by gair,
 And row it in my bluidy wounds,
 And they'll ne'er bleed nae mair."

He's taken aff his Holland sark,
 And torn it gair by gair;
 He's row it in his bluidy wounds,
 But they bleed ay mair and mair.

¹ For an explanation of words in this and other ballads, see Glossary at end of Volume.

“ Tak now aff my green mantle,
 And row me saftly in ;
 And tak me up to yon kirk style,
 Whare the grass grows fair and green.”

He 's taken aff the green mantle,
 And rowed him saftly in ;
 He 's laid him down by yon kirk style,
 Whare the grass grows fair and green.

JOHN.—“ What will ye say to your father dear,
 When ye gae hame at e'en?”

WILLIAM.—“ I 'll say ye 're lying at yon kirk style,
 Whare the grass grows fair and green.”

JOHN.—“ O no, O no, my brother dear,
 O you must not say so ;
 But say, that I 'm gaen to a foreign land,
 Whare nae man does me know.”

When he sat in his father's chair
 He grew baith pale and wan,

MOTHER.—“ O what blude's that upon your brow?
 O dear son tell to me.”

WILLIAM.—“ It is the blude o' my gude gray steed—
 He wadna ride wi' me.”

MOTHER.—“ O thy steed's blude was ne'er sae red,
 Nor e'er sae dear to me.

“ O what blude's that upon your cheek?
 O dear son, tell to me.”

WILLIAM.—“ It is the blude of my greyhound,
 He wadna hunt for me.”

MOTHER.—“ O thy hound's blude was ne'er sae red,
 Nor e'er sae dear to me ;

O what blude's this upon your hand?
 O dear son, tell to me.”

WILLIAM.—“ It is the blude of my gay goss hawk,
 He wadna flee for me.”

MOTHER.—“ O thy hawk's blude was ne'er sae red,
 Nor e'er sae dear to me.

“O what blude ’s this upon your dirk?
Dear Willie, tell to me.”

WILLIAM.—“It is the blude of my ae brother;
O, dule and wae is me.”

MOTHER.—“O what will ye say to your father?
Dear Willie, tell to me.”

WILLIAM.—“I ’ll saddle my steed, and awa I ’ll ride,
To dwell in some far countrie.”

MOTHER.—“O when will ye come hame again?
Dear Willie, tell to me.”

WILLIAM.—“When sun and mune leap on yon hill;
And that will never be.”

She turn’d hersel’ right round about,
And her heart burst into three;
“My ae best son is deid and gane,
And my tother ane I’ll ne’er see.”

GRISELDA.

IN Lombardy, where Piedmont’s Alpine bound
Sees fair Saluces’ region stretch’d around,
With long hereditary honours great
The Marquis Gautier rul’d his peaceful state.
Rich was his realm, and he its prime delight;
First of his noble stock in princely might;
Of well proportion’d limbs, of comely face;
Endow’d by nature’s boon with every grace,
Save that, enamour’d of free single life,
He brook’d no mention of the name of wife.

Sore grief of heart their lord’s reluctance gave
To many a vassal tried, and baron brave.
All met at length: new hopes from union rose;
And, the crowd praising what the chiefs propose,
Forth to the palace far’d a chosen band,
And thus they spoke the wishes of the land:

"Great Marquis, and our liege! in love we seek
 ('Tis very love emboldens us to speak)
 Thy presence and kind ear; we own us bless'd,
 And thee the noblest of thy rank, and best:
 Yet, dear dread sire! to thee time's course is known;
 Wing'd seasons pass, and are for ever gone!
 Thee, now in comeliness past all thy peers,
 And in thy lusty prime, and flower of years,
 Old age treads fast behind, with ceaseless pace,
 And death, that all things living must deface.
 Then grant thy vassals, (to sustain thy throne
 Aye bound and bent to make thy will their own,)
 Seek out some high-born dame, young, virtuous, fair,
 Saluces' sovereignty and bed to share:
 So, should a foul and disadvantageous fate
 Reach our lov'd lord, and snatch him from the state,
 Some comfort would be found, some stay remain,
 While o'er the weeping realm thy child should reign."

The barons paused: affection unrepress'd
 Rose, as they sued, in noble Gautier's breast:
 "Friends!" he replied, "it joys me, I confess,
 To pass good days in blissful singleness;
 Such has been aye my bent, from wedlock free
 To live, sans care, a life of liberty.
 In wedlock waning freedom shrinks to nought,
 If those claim trust, by sore experience taught:—
 Howbeit, my friends, your loyal suit has thriven;
 I'll wed me; and I trust all-bounteous heaven
 Shall guide me in the choice of this my wife,
 And strew with comfort what remains of life:
 Yet ye, in turn, must make one promise sure,
 Be she a rich man's daughter, or a poor,
 Of high or lowly lineage, as your dame
 Her to respect and honour aye the same:
 No blame may be endur'd, no slanderous voice
 Shall, murmuring, dare impeach your sovereign's choice."

So spake the Marquis, and with grateful cry
 All loud proclaim their vow'd fidelity.
 "Thanks for the boon!" well pleas'd he hears them say,
 Then joins in council for the nuptial day:
 On, through Saluces' region, cliff or vale,
 Flows universal joy, as spreads the tale.

Not far away the castle's brow look'd o'er
 The scatter'd dwellings of some village poor,

Nigh to a forest : and, on days of chase,
 The Marquis oft was passing through the place ;
 There, in this solitude, Janicola abode,
 An old poor man, so bow'd beneath the load
 Of crippling years, that he was fain to lie
 Oft on his bed, for mere infirmity.
 Yet oft within the mean unsightly cot
 Heaven's blessing dwells, and soothes its owner's lot :
 His wife, to kindred earth long since resign'd,
 Had left one darling duteous child behind ;
 For mind most rare, though rare in earthly frame,
 Griselidis the lovely maiden's name.
 Each morn, when first the sun was seen to peep,
 To pasture forth she led her father's sheep ;
 And, when the evening vapours clogg'd the air,
 Hous'd-in the scanty flock with mickle care :
 Then rais'd her aged sire with fostering arm,
 Smooth'd his hard bed, and made his pottage warm.

All service and all care a child can owe
 To a fond parent, still this maid would show ;
 With filial sweetness wayward pains assuage,
 And solace the decrepitude of age.

Long had the Marquis heard what rumour said
 Of the meet conduct of this village maid ;
 And oft, in hunting, halted where she stood,
 And gaz'd her beauties o'er in museful mood :
 " Should aught" (thus still his inmost thoughts would rise)
 " Cause me my freedom change for marriage ties,
 That excellent young maid I yonder see,
 Griselidis, the old man's child, is she."

Meanwhile the days and weeks were past and gone ;
 The hour, in council fix'd to wed, came on :
 The palace, throng'd to grace the nuptial rites
 With high-descended dames, and gallant knights,
 With burghers, and with folk of all degree,
 Seem'd one grand mart of choice festivity.
 But where the future spouse, how nam'd or known
 This chosen consort of Saluces' throne,
 Much ask'd, unanswer'd still, by knight or dame,
 Slept undivulg'd ; when forth the bridegroom came.
 On from his palace, gorgeous in array,
 As to receive the bride, he led the way ;
 In long-drawn files his issuing pomp succeeds,
 Dames, knights, and blazon'd arms, and prancing steeds.

Thus, sideways winding from the public road,
 He reach'd good old Janicola's abode.
 "Janicola!" quoth he, "my thoughts record
 Thee aye a faithful liegeman to thy lord.
 Now am I come to put thy love to test,
 And ask one proof surpassing all the rest:
 'Tis a dear boon, nor may I be denied;—
 Thy duteous child must be thy sovereign's bride."
 Scarce might the wondering man his silence break,
 To so strange proffer meet reply to make:
 Then humbly thus:—"Liege Lord! be all fulfill'd;
 My duty bids me will what thou hast will'd."

Griselidis the while, with glowing face,
 And eyes to earth that never chang'd their place,
 Stood all abash'd at such unwonted guest;
 And Gautier thus the downcast maid address'd:
 "Griselidis!" quoth he, "to be my mate,
 And share in wedlock's bands Saluces' state,
 Thee would I win; Janicola content,
 From his dear child I hope a like consent.
 Yet must I first require—canst thou abide,
 Nought from thy vow'd obedience turn'd aside,
 Strange stern commandments, wayward, steep'd in gall,
 And meekly execute or suffer all?
 This must my consort do; and this demand,
 'Tis fit thou answer ere I take thy hand."

"My liege!" Griselidis replied, "thy will
 Thy handmaid waits, obedient to fulfil;
 Behold me mute, to death itself resign'd,
 If such doom rise within my sovereign's mind."

Thus while she spoke, the Marquis leads the maid
 Where rang'd without his wondering barons stay'd:
 "Lo, friends!" he cries, "the dame my thoughts prefer!
 Me if ye love and honour, honour her!"
 E'en as he ceas'd, the long extended train
 Wheel'd round for proud Saluces' towers again:
 There seemly matrons, with officious speed,
 Doff, blushing as she stands, her lowly weed;
 With nuptial robes her trembling limbs invest,
 And straight Saluces' bride appears confess'd,
 Half wondering at herself:—All ye who hear,
 If, having seen the village maid whilere,
 Ye now beheld her proud Saluces' spouse,
 With the rich circle glittering on her brows,

Ye sure with strange emotion must have gaz'd,
And, as the garb, the princely wearer prais'd.

The self-same day behold the wedding rites,
With all that land might boast of choice delights :
Loud through the hall symphonious warblings sound,
And shouts that fill the echoing welkin round ;
Their sovereign's joy his faithful subjects share,
And greet, in crowds, the newly wedded pair.
Still as the weeks sped on, and more they knew,
Love for their princely mistress strengthen'd too :
So affable she seem'd, to all so kind,
With such a spotless majesty of mind,
That those who erst remember'd her, or not,
Hail'd, with united voice, her alter'd lot.

A year was scarcely past ;—and now she press'd
Her first-born infant to a mother's breast :
A little lovely maid, whose looks declare
A new Griselidis in promise fair,
To glad a father's heart, though not a prince's heir.
So, nourish'd with her mother's milk awhile,
Throve the sweet babe, and all things seem'd to smile ;
But, wean'd, at length, the restless Gautier's mood,
Though still each hour his growing fondness view'd,
Cast thus his consort's excellence to wound,
And urge meek duty to its utmost bound.
Her chamber entering, with dejected tone,
And looks spoke a bosom wo-begone,
“ Griselidis !” he said, “ I trust the pride
And pageantry of court has never tried
So far thy mind, as that thy former lot
Of rustic poverty should be forgot.—
For me, my spouse, as thou perchance may'st guess
By many a proof of constant tenderness,
All memory of the days thou once hadst known,
Was well nigh vanish'd quite away and gone.
But 'tis not so without :—my barons mourn ;
And chiefly since our female child was born,
Loud murmurs rise ; and ill 'tis brook'd, they say,
The daughter of the poor Janicola
Should claim their vassal-vows, though at a distant day.
“ Me mainly it behoves, come weal come wo,
To cause their loyalty and friendship grow :
Though to my heart the sacrifice come nigh,
Still yield I must to strong necessity.

Yet could I not proceed in my design,
 'Till I had thus forewarn'd thee, consort mine!
 And sought consent:—now then to proof arouse
 The patience pledg'd ere thou becom'st my spouse!"

"Dear sire!" (her look no sign of sadness spoke
 While thus Griselidis meek silence broke;)
 "Thou art my wedded lord!—my child and I
 Are thine too by the right of sovereignty.
 Whatever thou ordain, my loyal will
 Shall prove its vow'd obedience stedfast still."

She ceas'd to speak: to admiration mov'd
 At the sweet answer of the wife he lov'd,
 The Marquis Gautier straightway left the place
 With well-pretended sorrow in his face;
 Straight at his call a trusty wight appears,
 Gray with the services of thirty years:
 To him he shews the secret of his heart,
 With warnings, fitliest how to shape his part;
 And to the Marchioness the menial goes,
 And thus begins the messenger of woes:
 "Lady, and sovereign liege! with pardon bear
 The grievous mandate I must needs declare:—
 Briefly—my lord ordains, without delay,
 These arms should bear your infant child away."

Swift shot the thought, and seem'd her soul to rend,
 "This man my infant's hapless days must end!"—
 Howbe, her fears she stifled in her breast,
 Her struggling sobs, her rising tears suppress'd:
 Then with a long fond look, that might not weep,
 Gaz'd on her cradled darling, fast in sleep,
 And o'er its brows the Christian's symbol made,
 And gave one parting kiss, and Gautier's hest obey'd.

Back to his lord the trusty menial hies;
 Glad wonder sparkles in Saluces' eyes:
 Then, as the helpless babe to weep began,
 Stretch'd on his arm; it shook its inmost man:
 His wife's meek worth, his wailing infant's wo,
 Nigh made him swerve, and further proof forego.
 Yet, resolute of will, the menial old
 Anon he bids his secret course to hold
 To proud Boulogna's tower-defended gate,
 Where dwells his sister fair in sovereign state,
 Empeche's countess; to whose care consign'd
 Such nurture meet here infant niece should find

As her own child, yet nothing known or said
E'en to the princely consort of her bed.

So fares the babe ; while, with her wedded lord
As wont, the partner of his couch and board,
Griselidis remains ; nor might he spy,
Stamp'd on a thoughtful brow, or cheerless eye,
One trace betokening grief, or secret blame ;
Still meek Griselidis is found the same :
Still the same love, the same obedience shown,
And to her husband's heart conform'd her own.

A few years past—is born a goodly boy,
To fill the father and the realm with joy :
Seems the dark season of affliction o'er,
While nurtur'd, as its sister heretofore,
The heir to sire alike and mother dear,
Drew nigh the period of its second year ;
Then Gautier once again his spouse address'd,
And put the patience of her soul to test.

O ! what a mortal strife of sorrow rose
In this rare victim of unequall'd woes,
As, musing on her long-lost daughter's doom,
Her aching heart foretold her ill to come !
What mother lives there—nay, what woman's mind,
Not dead to every feeling of her kind,
But, when the cruel sentence smote her ears,
Had wept this sufferer's lot with bitter tears ?
Hear ! queens or cottagers !—hear ! base and high !
And profit by the peerless wife's reply !

“ Lov'd lord !” she said, “ ere from my home I came,
I vow'd a vow—I here confirm the same,—
Thy word, wish, thought, obsequious to fulfil,
And own no guide but noble Gautier's will.
Ere yet my footsteps pass'd thy palace gate,
And my poor weed was chang'd for robes of state,
I stripp'd me of myself ; and were it mine,
Your inmost thoughts prophetic to divine,
My duty should forerun your slow command :—
Lo ! if my death may please, lo, here I stand !—
Far better brook I death, held now at nought,
Than thy displeasure, lord, though but in thought.”

Such stedfastness may seem, to stranger eye,
Mere fault of nature in her tenderest tie ;
But Gautier, who had notic'd at her breast
How either babe was lov'd, and how caress'd,

Well knew that love alone such force inspir'd,
And more and more his matchless spouse admir'd.

This second dreadful trial overcome,
This darling's fate hung round with deadly gloom,
Meseems that Gautier should have spar'd to prove
With further sorrow such unshaken love.
Some hearts, howbe, there are, of canker'd mould,
Whom shrewd suspicion governs uncontroll'd;
Who, when they once begin, can never cease:
Whose solace springs from marring others' peace.
Such then might Gautier's be; for though he found
His wife's meek fondness more and more abound,
His jealous spirit still new torments stor'd,
And anguish for the woman he ador'd.

Twelve years had now a circling race fulfill'd,
Since to Boulogna went the female child;
The son was eight; and Gautier ween'd their age
Less suited now to foreign pupillage:
To prove their mother then, he spreads report
Of a strange lady journeying to his court,
High-born, and young withal, and debonair,
In wedlock's bands Saluces' throne to share.
Then, summoning his spouse, the wayward man,
Girt with his chosen barons, thus began:

"Griselidis, twelve years I have enjoy'd
Thy wedded excellence, unchang'd, uncloy'd:
I pleas'd my soul with such transcendent worth,
And, finding virtue, disregarded birth.
Now have my vassals' claim:—with loud demand,
'Childless,' they cry, 'the sceptre of the land,
Needs then must Gautier wed, nor rightful suit withstand.'
Rome's holy pontiff yields to the request,
And grants their Marquis choose where likes him best.
Ere many days be pass'd, the noble bride
Comes, and our vows will then be ratified.

Thou, therefore, now retire! take back thy dower!
And arm thee to endure the advancing hour!"

"My lord!" Griselidis began to say,

"Well wist I, sprung from poor Janicola,
Low, cottage-born, to humble labour bred,
I never could beseem Saluces' bed.

Heaven knows, since first within these walls I came,
By thee to honour rais'd, thy wedded dame,

Though grateful evermore, how could I less?—
Still have I felt my own unworthiness!

“ Now, dear my lord, since thou hast will'd it so,
Hence, unlamenting what is left, I go!
From these fair scenes awayward turn my sight,
Scenes, where I long have sojourn'd with delight,
And humbly, as befits me, forth I hie,
In the same cottage I was born, to die:
And, ere this fall, to him who gave me birth,
Smoothing his dreary passage to the earth,
Once more a daughter's duty to fulfil,
Left to a stranger long, against my will!

“ For what thou say'st of dower, thou know'st, my lord,
When erst thou led'st me to thy couch and board,
My all was a chaste heart, true love for thee,
And reverence, clad in honest poverty.
These robes that cover me to thee pertain:
Take them! and yield me my coarse weeds again:
This ring—here—here! no longer my concern!—
Poor from my father came I, poor return;
Nought coveting hence with me but the name
Of Gautier's widow'd consort, void of blame!”

Much was Saluces mov'd: it shook him so,
He turn'd, to let his tears in secret flow.
Meanwhile Griselidis her purpose sped;
Stripp'd off the sparkling gems that grac'd her head,
Her sumptuous robes, her garniture of state;
And sought in russet weed the palace gate.
Her, dames and knights and barons, passing forth,
Attend, in weeping witness of her worth:
She only, wept not; mute, with look profound,
Slow pacing home, and gazing on the ground.

Janicola, whom years, not pass'd in vain,
Had shown that nought below might firm remain,
Nor rage, nor grief, nor wonder in his face,
Clasp'd his dear offspring with a sire's embrace,
Then thank'd the nobles all with plain good-will,
And warn'd them to their prince be loyal still.

“ Such strange disparagement can prosper nought;”
Thus wisely from the first the old man thought;
“ My daughter's charms must minish and decay,
And Gautier send her home some future day:”
Yet one thing to the father's heart went near;
“ The loss of delicates by use grown dear

Must needs press hard ; and ill the pamper'd mind
Brook years to pinching poverty consign'd."

And now, with brave array, and gorgeous train,
Empeche's count and countess haste amain,
Scarce one day's journey from Saluces' land,
And bring two lovely children in their hand.
Then to complete her sum of trials sore,
Gautier assay'd his peerless spouse once more :
" Child of Janicola !" he briefly cried,
" To-morrow brings my long-expected bride :
Thyself, meseems, past other women skill'd
To see my princely wishes well fulfill'd :
With her my sister and her count draw nigh,
And a proud train of matchless chivalry :
Thou, then, for all provide ; hall, bower, and feast ;
Yet chieffiest for thy sovereign's bridal guest."

Griselidis, in weeds of homely gray,
Meet orders issuing, hastes her to obey ;
There, with a modest, mute, unvarying grace,
That thread-bare poverty could not debase,
Respectfully she waits the bride to greet,
And to her bower straightway conducts her feet.
She wist not how it were, but still she turn'd,
And inly, by a wondrous instinct, yearn'd ;
Gaz'd on the dainty maid, the ingenuous boy,
And felt inspir'd as with a mother's joy.

Now were the countless guests assembled all ;
Steam'd the choice banquet in the vaulted hall ;
Chief of the feast sat Gautier, by his side
Prime beauty, costliest art, declare the bride.
" How think'st thou then ?" he cries with jocund voice,
Dost thou, Griselidis, approve my choice ?"
" Yes, truly, lord !—a worthier or more fair
Might not," quoth she, " be chosen any where ;
Heaven grant ye happiness ! my prayer shall rise
Each day for this, in humble sacrifice.
Yet, sire ! for pity's sake forbear to burst
This heart with piercing anguish like the first !
Her tender years, her nurture, daintier high,
Might not abide the proof !—the maid would die !"

Thus while she spake, tears, nothing could restrain,
Flow'd down Saluces' moisten'd cheeks amain :
" Dear, dear Griselidis !" aloud he cried,
" There lives not man on earth, myself beside,

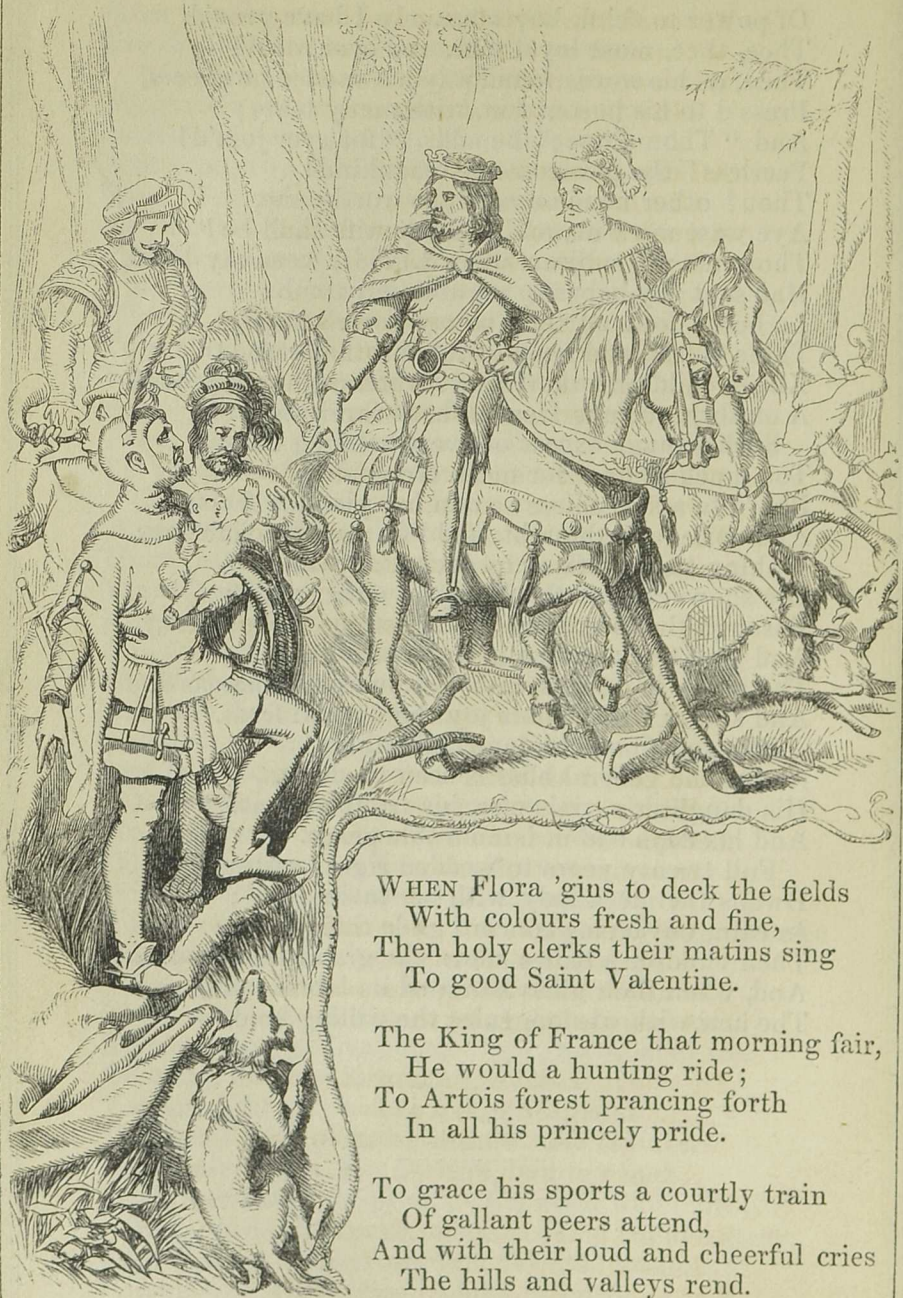
Of power to think how strangely I have prov'd,
 Thee, thee, most loyal wife, and ever lov'd!"—
 Then, as his words found way his spouse he cheers,
 Press'd to his bosom fast, with many tears;
 And "Thou alone;" he adds, "for ever join'd!
 Peerless! the paragon of womankind!
 Thou! other none on earth so worthy me,
 Aye wast my wife, and still my wife shall be!
 Thou, (so my subjects ween'd,) didst ween my doom,
 Had sent thy babes to an untimely tomb;
 Lo here! long nurtur'd by my sister's hand,
 Thine eldest, and her princely brother stand!
 Kneel, children twain! and reverence, humbly bent,
 A mother, such as Heaven hath rarely sent!"

Such strange excess of overwhelming bliss,
 Too much at once for meek Griselidis,
 Bow'd to a speechless swoon her yielding frame,
 And voice, and thought, and life, a while o'ercame:
 Waking anon, with arms encircling wild,
 She shower'd a mother's joy on either child:
 Through the long train the infectious feeling flies,
 And glad tears glisten in a thousand eyes:
 The blithe hall rings with welcomes aye increas'd,
 And smiles with double joy the nuptial feast.

Eftsoons good old Janicola is there,
 And in the general bliss is seen to share.
 His daughter's trials o'er, his troubles cease,
 And his days end in honourable peace.

Full twenty years to wedded rights restor'd,
 Dwells the meek lady, with her loving lord;
 In calm unvarying concord glide their hours;
 Their children's babes adorn the grandsire's bowers:
 And, when their glass has shed its latest sand,
 The heir with wisdom rules the willing land.

Valentine and Arsine.



WHEN Flora 'gins to deck the fields
With colours fresh and fine,
Then holy clerks their matins sing
To good Saint Valentine.

The King of France that morning fair,
He would a hunting ride;
To Artois forest prancing forth
In all his princely pride.

To grace his sports a courtly train
Of gallant peers attend,
And with their loud and cheerful cries
The hills and valleys rend.

Through the deep forest swift they pass,
Through woods and thickets wild;
When down within a lonely dell
They found a new-born child;

All in a scarlet kercher laid
Of silk so fine and thin;
A golden mantle wrapt him round,
Pinn'd with a silver pin.

The sudden sight surprised them all;
The courtiers gather'd round;
They look, they call, the mother seek;
No mother could be found.

At length the king himself drew near,
And as he gazing stands,
The pretty babe look'd up and smiled,
And stretch'd his little hands.

"Now, by the rood," King Pepin says,
"This child is passing fair:
I wot he is of gentle blood;
Perhaps some Prince's heir.

"Go bear him home unto my court
With all the care ye may:
Let him be christen'd Valentine,
In honour of this day:

"And look me out some cunning nurse;
Well nurtured let him be;
Nor aught be wanting that becomes
A bairn of high degree."

They look'd him out a cunning nurse;
And nurtured well was he;
Nor ought was wanting that became
A bairn of high degree.

Thus grew the little Valentine,
Beloved of king and peers;
And show'd in all he spake or did
A wit beyond his years.

But chief in gallant feates of arms
He did himself advance,
That ere he grew to man's estate,
He had no peeres in France.

And now the early down began
To shade his youthful chin;
When Valentine was dubb'd a knight,
That he might glory win.

“A boon, a boon, my gracious liege,
I beg a boon of thee!
The first adventure that befalls,
May be reserved for me.”

“The first adventure shall be thine,”
The king did smiling say,
Nor many days, when lo, there came
Three palmers clad in grey.

“Help, gracious lord,” they weeping said,
And knelt, as it was meet:
“From Artois forest we be come,
With weak and weary feet.

“Within those deep and dreary woods
There wends a savage boy,
Whose fierce and mortal rage doth yield
Thy subjects dire annoy.

“'Mong ruthless beares he sure was bred,
He lurks within their den;
With beares he lives, with beares he feeds,
And drinks the blood of men.

“To more than savage strength he joins
A more than human skill;
For arms ne cunning may suffice
His cruel rage to still.”

Up then rose Sir Valentine,
And claim'd that arduous deed:
“Go forth and conquer,” said the king,
“And great shall be thy meed.”

Well mounted on a milk-white steed,
His armour white as snow,
As well beseem'd a virgin knight,
Who ne'er had fought a foe.

To Artois forest he repairs
With all the haste he may ;
And soon he spies the savage youth
A rending of his prey.

His unkempt hair all matted hung
His shaggy shoulders round ;
His eager eye all fiery glow'd,
His face with fury frown'd.

Like eagle's talons grew his nails,
His limbs were thick and strong ;
And dreadful was the knotted oak
He bare with him along.

Soon as Sir Valentine approach'd,
He starts with sudden spring ;
And yelling forth a hideous howl,
He made the forests ring.

As when a tiger fierce and fell
Hath spied a passing roe,
And leaps at once upon his throat,
So sprung the savage foe ;

So lightly leap'd with furious force
The gentle knight to seize ;
But met his tall uplifted spear,
Which sunk him on his knees.

A second stroke so stiff and stern
Had laid the savage low ;
But springing up he raised his club,
And aim'd a dreadful blow.

The watchful warrior bent his head,
And shunn'd the coming stroke ;
Upon his taper spear it fell,
And all to shivers broke.

Then lighting nimbly from his steed,
He drew his burnish'd brand ;
The savage quick as lightning flew
To wrest it from his hand.

Three times he grasp'd the silver hilt ;
Three times he felt the blade ;
Three times it fell with furious force ;
Three ghastly wounds it made.

Now with redoubled rage he roar'd ;
His eye-ball flash'd with fire ;
Each hairy limb with fury shook ;
And all his heart was ire.

Then closing, fast with furious gripe
He clasp'd the champion round,
And with a strong and sudden twist
He laid him on the ground.

But soon the knight, with active spring,
O'erturn'd his hairy foe :
And now between their sturdy fists
Pass'd many a bruising blow.

They roll'd and grappled on the ground,
And there they struggled long ;
Skilful and active was the knight ;
The savage he was strong.

But brutal force and savage strength
To art and skill must yield ;
Sir Valentine at length prevail'd,
And won the well-fought field.

Then binding strait his conquer'd foe
Fast with an iron chain,
He ties him to his horse's tail,
And leads him o'er the plain.

To Court his savage captive soon
Sir Valentine doth bring ;
And kneeling down upon his knee,
Presents him to the king.

With loss of blood and loss of strength
 The savage tamer grew ;
 And to Sir Valentine became
 A servant tried and true.

And 'cause with bears he erst was bred,
 Ursine they call'd his name,—
 A name which unto future times
 The minstrels shall proclaim.

Part the Second,

IN high renown with prince and peer
 Now lived Sir Valentine :
 His high renown with prince and peer
 Made envious hearts repine.

It chanced the king upon a day
 Prepared a sumptuous feast ;
 And there came lords and dainty dames,
 And many a noble guest.

Amid their cups, that freely flow'd,
 Their revelry and mirth,
 A youthful knight tax'd Valentine
 Of base and doubtful birth.

The foul reproach, so grossly urged,
 His generous heart did wound ;
 And straight he vow'd he ne'er would rest
 Till he his parents found.

Then bidding king and peers adieu,
 Early one summer's day,
 With faithful Ursine by his side,
 From court he took his way.

O'er hill and valley, moss and moor,
For many a day they pass ;
At length, upon a moated lake,
They found a bridge of brass.

Beyond it rose a castle fair,
Y-built of marble stone ;
The battlements were gilt with gold,
And glitter'd in the sun.

Beneath the bridge with strange device,
A hundred bells were hung ;
That man nor beast might pass thereon,
But straight their 'larum rung.

This quickly found the youthful pair,
Who boldly crossing o'er,
The jangling sound bedeaft their ears,
And rung from shore to shore.

Quick at the sound the castle-gates
Unlock'd and open'd wide,
And straight a giant huge and grim
Stalk'd forth with stately pride.

"Now yield you, caitiffs, to my will!"
He cried with hideous roar ;
"Or else the wolves shall eat your flesh,
And ravens drink your gore."

"Vain boaster," said the youthful knight,
"I scorn thy threats and thee ;
I trust to force thy brazen gates,
And set thy captives free."

Then putting spurs unto his steed,
He aim'd a dreadful thrust ;
The spear against the giant glanced,
And caused the blood to burst.

Mad and outrageous with the pain,
He whirl'd his mace of steel :
The very wind of such a blow
Had made the champion reel.

It happ'ly miss'd ; and now the knight
His glittering sword display'd,
And riding round with whirlwind speed,
Oft made him feel the blade.

As when a large and monstrous oak
Unceasing axes hew,
So fast around the giant's limbs
The blows quick-darting flew.

As when the boughs with hideous fall
Some hapless woodman crush,
With such a force the enormous foe
Did on the champion rush.

A fearful blow, alas! there came,—
Both horse and knight it took,
And laid them senseless in the dust ;
So fatal was the stroke.

Then smiling forth a hideous grin,
The giant strides in haste,
And, stooping, aims a second stroke :
“ Now, caitiff, breathe thy last ! ”

But ere it fell, two thundering blows
Upon his skull descend :
From Ursine's knotty club they came,
Who ran to save his friend.

Down sunk the giant gaping wide,
And rolling grim his eyes :
The youth repeats his heavy blows :
He gasps, he groans, he dies.

Quickly Sir Valentine revived
With Ursine's timely care :
And now to search the castle-walls
The venturous youths repair.

The blood and bones of murder'd knights
They found where'er they came :
At length within a lonely cell
They saw a mournful dame.

Her gentle eyes were dimm'd with tears ;
Her cheeks were pale with woe :
And long Sir Valentine besought
Here doleful tale to know.

“ Alas ! young knight,” she weeping said,
“ Condole my wretched fate ;
A childless mother here you see ;
A wife without a mate.

“ These twenty winters here forlorn
I've drown my hated breath ;
Sole witness of a monster's crimes,
And wishing aye for death.

“ Know, I am sister of a king,
And in my early years
Was married to a mighty prince,
The fairest of his peers.

“ With him I sweetly lived in love
Full many a happy day ;
When, lo ! a foul and treacherous man
Y-wrought our love's decay.

“ His seeming goodness won him power ;
He had his master's ear :
And long to me and all the world
He did a saint appear.

“ With treason, villany, and wrong,
My goodness he repaid ;
With evil thoughts he fill'd my lord,
And me to death betray'd.

“ But, moved by my complaints and tears,
At length my life he spared ;
But bade me instant quit the realm,
One trusty knight my guard.

“ Forth on my journey I depart,
Oppress'd with grief and woe ;
And towards my brother's distant court,
With my two babes, I go.

“ But now afresh begin my woes :
While tender care I took
To shield my eldest from the cold
And wrap him in my cloak ;

“ A prowling bear burst from a wood,
And seized my younger son :
Affection lent my weakness wings,
And after them I run.

“ But all forewearied, weak, and spent,
I quickly swoon'd away ;
And there beneath the greenwood shade
Long time I lifeless lay.

“ At length my knight brought me relief,
And raised me from the gound ;
But neither of my pretty babes
Could ever more be found.

“ And, while in search we wander'd far,
We met that giant grim ;
Who ruthless slew my trusty knight,
And bare me off with him.

“ But charm'd by heaven, or else my griefs,
He offer'd me no wrong,
Save that within these lonely walls
I've been immured so long.”

“ Now, surely,” said the youthful knight,
“ You are Lady Bellisance,
Wife to the Grecian emperor :
Your brother's king of France.

“ For in your royal brother's court
Myself my breeding had ;
Where oft the story of your woes
Hath made my bosom sad.

“ If so, know your accuser's dead,
And dying own'd his crime ;
And long your lord hath sought you out
Through every foreign clime.

“ And when no tidings he could learn
Of his much-wronged wife,
He vow'd thenceforth within his court
To lead a hermit's life.”

“ Now Heaven is kind !” the lady said,
And dropp'd a joyful tear :
“ Shall I once more behold my lord—
That lord I love so dear ?”

“ But, madam,” said Sir Valentine,
And knelt upon his knee,
“ Know you the cloak that wrapp'd your babe,
If you the same should see ?”

And pulling forth the cloth of gold
In which himself was found,
The lady gave a sudden shriek,
And fainted on the ground.

But by his pious care revived,
His tale she heard anon ;
And soon by other tokens found
He was indeed her son.

“ But who's this youth ?” she wond'ring said ;
“ He much resembles thee :
The bear devour'd my younger son,
Or sure that son were he.”

“ Madam, this youth with bears was bred,
And rear'd within their den :
But recollect ye any mark
To know your son agen ?”

“ Upon his little side,” quoth she,
“ Was stamp'd a bloody rose.”
“ Here, lady, see the crimson mark
Upon his body grows !”

Then clasping both her new-found sons,
She bath'd their cheeks with tears ;
And soon towards her brother's court
Her joyful course she steers.

What pen can paint King Pepin's joy,
His sister thus restor'd!
And soon a messenger was sent
To cheer her drooping lord;

Who came in haste, with all his peers,
To fetch her home to Greece;
Where many happy years they reign'd
In perfect love and peace.

To them Sir Ursine did succeed,
And long the sceptre bare.
Sir Valentine he stay'd in France,
And was his uncle's heir.

THE BARON AND THE MAIDEN

OF

LOW DEGREE.

THE baron sat on his castle wall,
And beheld both dale and down;
The manors that stretched so far around,
He knew to be all his own.

The wardens blew their sounding horns,
And their banners waved in air;
Their horns resounded o'er the dale,
Their colours shone afar.

The baron he sighed as he looked above,
And he sighed as he looked adown;
Although the rich manors that stretched so far,
He knew to be all his own.

Up, then, came his ancient nurse
That had borne him on her knee—
“ And why dost thou sigh, thou noble youth,
At a sight so fair to see?”

Oh! then, up spake that noble baron,
And heavily spake he,
“ But I've never a true and faithful wife
To share it all with me.

“ And if I should marry a courtly dame,
(Alas that it so should be,)
She'd love my castles, and love my lands,
But she would not care for me.”

Oh! then, up spake that ancient nurse,
“ Now take advice of me :
If you'd have a true wife, then go and find
A maiden of low degree.

“ And be disguised in plain attire,
And like a peasant rove,
But let her not know thy high degree ;
So shalt thou prove her love.”

Then called the baron his young foot-page,
Full loudly called he,
The bonny foot-page full swiftly ran
And knelt him on his knee.

“ Oh! hark thee well, my young foot-page,
To what I tell to thee ;
And keep thee my secret faithfully,
And thou shalt have gold and fee.

“ Go bring me here a peasant's coat,
With hose and shoon also ;
And artfully disguise my face,
That no one may me know.

“ And when I go, and when I come,
Let no one hear from thee,
But keep my secret faithfully,
And thou shalt have gold and fee.”

The sunbeam gilt the distant hills,
And on the streams did play,
When in a peasant's homely garb
That baron took his way.

The early pilgrim blithe he hail'd,
That o'er the hills did stray,
And many an early husbandman
That met him on his way.

And blithe and merrily did he wend,
And blithe and merrily hied,
Until he came to a rural cot,
Where a maiden fair did bide.

Though lowly and unknown to fame,
This maid was passing fair ;
Like some sweet violet that in vale
Sequestered scents the air.

Sweet was the melody of her voice
The woodland wilds among,
So sweet, that thrushes on the spray
Sat list'ning to her song.

But more than all, her youthful heart
Was fraught with virtue's lore ;
More pure, more tender, and more true,
Was maiden ne'er before.

The maiden stood at her cottage gate
Her nursling lamb to feed,
And she saw the blithesome stranger youth
Come tripping o'er the mead.

And lo ! with many a fond excuse
The youth would there remain,
While many a wily tale he told,
Her simple heart to gain.

And soon her sighs and blushes told
She did the youth approve ;
For where's the heart that can resist
The vows of faithful love ?

“ Lo ! I’ve a cottage, and I’ve a cow,
 And many sheep beside ;
 And I’ve a field of ripening corn ;
 And I’ll make thee my bride.”

The listening damsel heard his vows,
 And thrice for joy she sighed ;
 She thought the stranger passing rich,
 And said she’d be his bride.

And oft her mother heard the tale,
 Nor did the dame repine ;
 “ And if thou canst keep her, stranger youth,
 The damsel shall be thine.”

“ Ah, then, farewell, my charming fair,”
 The lordling peasant cries,
 “ For I must wend for many a mile
 Ere I can take a bride.”

“ Oh ! say not so, then, stranger youth,
 Oh say not so, I pray !
 For if thou dost go—oh, I shall rue
 That e’er you came this way.”

“ Yes, I must go, thou charming maid,
 I can no longer stay ;
 Though ever until I here return,
 Must I moan the livelong day.

“ But if before I come again,
 This passing month shall slide,
 Oh, then no more await for me,
 But be another’s bride.

“ For death may meet me on the way,
 And from thy arms divide ;
 Or dire misfortune blast my joys,
 And ’rive me of my bride.”

Oh ! then fast flowed the maiden’s tears,
 While tenderly she cried,
 “ Oh ! no, dear youth, though thou shouldst die,
 I’ll be no other’s bride !”

The maiden's face with grief was sad,
Her cheek was wet with tears ;
So the pale lily, besprent with rain,
Or dew-dropt rose appears.

Part the Second.

AND now for many weeks and months
The baron he did stay,
Nor did he seek his dear lov'd maid
For many a livelong day.

And, though the tender sigh it cost,
And heartfelt tear did move,
Full many a month he stay'd away,
Her constancy to prove.

At length he called his knights and squires,
And neighbours of his degree,
To travel, in all the pomp of state,
The lovely maid to see.

And now, with gay and gallant train,
That baron took his way ;
The golden sun that so high did shine
Did gild his pomp that day.

The maiden stood at her garden pale,
In hopes her love t' espy ;
And every peasant that she saw,
She heaved a heartfelt sigh.

" Alas ! and woe is me ! " she cried,
" Could I my love but see !
I fear the stranger youth is dead,
Or thinks no more of me . "

Thus sighed the maid, as o'er the plain
She look'd for her true love ;
When sudden she saw the gallant train
Towards her cottage move.

And soon the baron hath cross'd the green ;
 And smilingly he cried,—
 “ Sweet maid, I ’ve heard thy beauty’s fame,
 And thou shalt be my bride.

“ Rich robes of state shall deck thy frame,
 A coronet gild thy brow ;
 And a castle shalt thou have for dower,
 With manors high and low.”

The maiden but sigh’d at all his bribes,
 Her faith they could not move ;
 For little she thought this gay baron
 Could be her own true love.

Thus, though to gain the maiden’s hand
 This gallant baron strove,
 Yet all his grandeur she despis’d,
 For the youth that she did love.

And, though her angry mother tried
 Her constant heart to move,
 As vain were her mother’s cruel threats
 As the baron’s golden love.

Part the Third.

NIGHT was come on, and o’er the plain
 The moon’s pale glimmering shone,
 When the hapless maiden took her way,
 All friendless and alone :—

All helpless and alone she sped,
 And sadly did she rove,
 O’er many a hill and many a dale,
 In search of her peasant love.

And now the pale, full moon was gone,
 And stormy clouds did lower ;
 Her sighings added to the wind,
 Her tears increas’d the shower.

And, though full loud the thunders roll'd,
And wet, wet pour'd the rain,
Yet still, in search of her lov'd youth,
She brav'd the stormy plain.

Rous'd with the warring of the storm,
The baron up arose ;
And soon, in search of his beauteous maid,
With anxious speed he goes.

But, lo ! the hapless maid was gone
Through desarts wild to rove,—
Alas ! all friendless and alone,—
In search of her true love.

Oh ! then that baron griev'd full sore,
And his foot-page called he :
" Oh ! bring me here my peasant garb,
As quick as ye can flee."

Oh ! then rode forth this young baron,
O'er many a dreary way ;
When, alas ! all on the stormy plain
He saw the maiden lay.

O'ercome with toil, and spent with grief,
That hapless maid had fell :
The baron he wip'd his quivering brow,
While his heart it 'gan to swell.

He got him water from the brook,
And sprinkled o'er the maid ;
But many a tear that from him fell
Lent most its saving aid.

Right glad he mark'd her struggling breath,
And blush reviving face,
While tender he welcom'd her to life,
With many a fond embrace.

" And art thou found, my own true love,
And art thou come," she said,
" Then blest be the night, and blest the hour,
When from our cot I fled."

Thus spake the maid; and fast they rode
 Through many a lonely way;
 And she thought that to his humble cot
 Her love would her convey.

But soon they reach'd the castle wall,
 And came to the castle gate;
 When, lo! the youth, without delay,
 Rode boldly in thereat.

Thrice turn'd the maiden wan and pale,
 And with fear her heart was moved,
 When she saw the lordly baron was
 The peasant youth she loved.

But blithe he cried,—“Cheer up, my fair;
 Forgive my pride, I pray;
 And, lo! for thy faith, thus nobly proved,
 Be this thy bridal day.

“Although thou wast but a lowly maid,
 Thou art now my countess gay;
 Then, come, cheer up, my love so true,
 For this is our bridal day.”

The wardens blew their sounding horns,
 And their banners stream'd in air;
 Their horns resounded o'er the dale;
 The banners shone afar.

SIR CAULINE.

The First Part.

In Ireland, ferr over the sea,
 There dwelleth a bonnye kinge;
 And with him a yong and comlye knighte,
 Men call hym Syr Cauline.

The kinge had a ladye to his daughter,
 In fashyon she hath no peere;
 And princely wightes that ladye wooed
 To be theyr wedded feere.

Syr Cauline loveth her best of all,
 But nothing durst he saye;
 Ne descreeve his counsayl to no man,
 But deerlye he lovde this may.

Till on a daye it so beffell,
 Great dill to him was dight;
 The maydens love removde his mynd,
 To care-bed went the knyghte.

One while he spred his armes him fro,
 One while he spred them nye:
 And aye! "but I winne that ladyes love,
 For dole now I mun dye."

And whan our parish-masse was done,
 Our kinge was bowne to dyne:
 He says, "Where is Syr Cauline,
 That is wont to serve the wyne?"

Then aunswerde him a courteous knyghte,
 And fast his handes gan wringe:
 "Sir Cauline is sicke, and like to dye
 Without a good leechinge."

"Fetche me downe my daughter deere,
 She is a leeche fulle fine:
 Goe take him doughe, and the baken bread,
 And serve him with the wyne soe red;
 Loth I were him to tine."

Fair Christabelle to his chaumber goes,
 Her maydens followyng nye:
 "O well," she sayth, "how doth my lorde?"
 "O sicke, thou fayr ladyè."

"Nowe ryse up wightlye, man, for shame,
 Never lye soe cowardlee;
 For it is told in my father's halle,
 You dye for love of mee."

“ Fayre ladye, it is for your love
 That all this dill I drye :
 For if you wold comfort me with a kisse,
 Then were I brought from bale to blisse,
 No lenger wold I lye.”

“ Sir knighte, my father is a kinge,
 I am his onlye heire ;
 Alas ! and well you knowe, syr knighte,
 I never can be youre fere.”

“ O ladye, thou art a kinges daughtèr,
 And I am not thy peere,
 But let me doe some deedes of armes
 To be your bacheleere.”

“ Some deedes of armes if thou wilt doe,
 My bacheleere to bee,
 But ever and aye my heart wold rue,
 Giff harm shold happe to thee.

“ Upon Eldridge hill there groweth a thorne,
 Upon the mores brodinge ;
 And dare ye, syr knighte, wake there all nighte,
 Untill the fayre mornìnge ?

“ For the Eldridge knighte, so mickle of mighte,
 Will examine you beforne :
 And never man bare life awaye,
 But he did him scath and scorne.

“ That knighte he is a fond paynim,
 And large of limb and bone ;
 And but if heaven may be thy speede,
 Thy life it is but gone.”

“ Nowe on the Eldridge hilles Ile walke,¹
 For thy sake, faire ladie ;
 And Ile either bring you a ready tokèn,
 Or Ile never more you see.”

1 Perhaps *wake*, as it occurs elsewhere in the ballad.

The lady is gone to her own chambère,
Her maydens following bright :
Syr Cauline lope from care-bed soone,
And to the Eldridge hills is gone,
For to wake there all night.

Unto midnight, that the moone did rise,
He walked up and downe :
Then a lightsome bugle heard he blowe
Over the bents soe browne ;
Quoth hee, “ If cryance come till my heart,
I am ffar from any good towne.”

And soone he spyde on the mores so broad,
A furyous wight and fell ;
A ladye bright his brydle led,
Clad in a fayre kyrtell ;

And soe fast he called on Syr Cauline,
“ O man, I rede thee flye,
For ‘ but ’ if cryance comes till my heart,
I weene but thou mun dye.”

He sayth, “ No cryance comes till my heart,
Nor in fayth, I wyll not flee ;
For, cause thou minged not Christ before,
The less me dreadeth thee.”

The Eldridge knyghte, he pricked his steed ;
Syr Cauline bold abode :
Then either shooke his trustye speare,
And the timber these two knyghts did bear
So soone in sunder slode.

Then tooke they out theyr two good swordes,
And layden on full faste,
Till helme and hawberke, mail and sheelde,
They all were well-nye brast.

The Eldridge knight was mickle of might,
And stiffe in stower did stande,
But Syr Cauline with a “ backward ” stroke
He smote off his right hand ;
That soone he with paine and lacke of bloud
Fell downe on that lay-land.

Then up Syr Cauline lifte his brande
 All over his head so hye :
 “ And here I sweare by the holy roode,
 Nowe caytiffe, thou shalt dye.”

Then up and came that ladye brighte,
 Fast wringing of her hande :
 “ For the maydens love, that most you love,
 Withold that deadlye brande :

“ For the maydens love, that most you love,
 Nowe smyte no more, I praye ;
 And aye whatever thou wilt, my lord,
 He shall thy hests obeye.

“ Nowe sweare to mee, thou Eldridge knight,
 And here on this lay-land,
 That thou wilt believe on Christ his laye,
 And thereto plight thy hand :

“ And that thou never on Eldridge come,
 To sporte, gamon, or playe :
 And that thou here give up thy armes
 Until thy dyinge daye.”

The Eldridge knighte gave up his armes
 With many a sorrowfulle sighe :
 And sware to obey Syr Caulines hest,
 Till the tyme that he shold dye.

And he then up, and the Eldridge knighte
 Sett him in his saddle anone,
 And the Eldridge knighte and his ladye
 To theyr castle are they gone.

Then he tooke up the bloody hand,
 That was so large of bone,
 And on it he founde five ringes of gold
 Of knightes that had been slone.

Then he tooke up the Eldridge sworde,
 As hard as any flint :
 And he tooke off those ringes five,
 As bright as fyre and brent.

Home then pricked Syr Cauline
 As light as leafe on tree :
 I-wys he neither stint ne blanne,
 Till he his lady see.

Then downe he knelt upon his knee
 Before that lady gay :
 " O ladye, I have bin on the Eldridge hills :
 These tokens I bring away."

" Now welcome, welcome, Syr Cauline,
 Thrice welcome unto mee,
 For now I perceiue thou art a true knighte,
 Of valour bolde and free."

" O ladye, I am thy own true knighte,
 Thy hests for to obaye :
 And mought I hope to winne thy love!"—
 Ne more his tonge colde say.

The lady blushed scarlette redde,
 And fette a gentill sighe :
 " Alas! syr knight, how may this bee,
 For my degree's soe highe ?

" But sith thou hast hight, thou comely youth,
 To be my batchilere,
 Ile promise if thee I may not wedde
 I will have none other fere."

Then shee held forthe her lily-white hand
 Towards that knighte so free ;
 He gave to it one gentill kisse,
 His heart was brought from bale to blisse,
 The teares sterte from his ee.

" But keep my counsayl, Syr Cauline,
 Ne let no man it knowe ;
 For and ever my father sholde it ken,
 I wot he wolde us sloe."

From that day forthe that ladye fayre
 Lovde Syr Cauline, the knighte :
 From that day forthe he only joyde
 Whan shee was in his sight.

Yea, and oftentimes they mette
 Within a fayre arboure,
 Where they in love and sweet delights
 Past manye a pleasant houre.

Part the Second.

EVERYE white will have its blacke,
 And everye sweete its sowre:
 This founde the Ladye Christabelle
 In an untimely howre.

For so it befelle, as Syr Cauline
 Was with that ladye faire,
 The kinge, her father, walked forthe
 To take the evenyng aire:

And into the arboure as he went
 To rest his wearye feet,
 He found his daughter and Syr Cauline
 There sette in company sweet.

The kinge hee sterted forthe, i-wys,
 And an angrye man was hee:
 "Nowe, traytoure, thou shalt hange or drawe,
 And rewe shall thy ladie."

Then forthe Syr Cauline he was ledde,
 And throwne in dungeon deepe:
 And the layde into a towre so hye
 There left to wayle and weepe.

The queene she was Syr Cauline's friend,
 And to the kinge sayd shee:
 "I praye you save Syr Cauline's life,
 And let him banisht bee."

"Now, dame, that traitor shalt be sent
 Across the salt sea fome:
 But here I will make thee a band,
 If ever he come within this land,
 A foule deathe is his doome."

All woe-begone was that gentil knight
 To parte from his ladyè;
 And many a time he sighed sore,
 And cast a wistfulle eye:
 "Faire Christabelle, from thee to parte,
 Farre lever had I dye."

Faire Christabelle, that ladye bright,
 Was had forthe of the towre;
 But ever shee droopeth in her minde,
 As nipt by an ungentle winde
 Doth some faire lillye flowre.

And ever shee doth lament and weepe
 To tint her lover soe:
 "Syr Cauline, thou little think'st on mee,
 But I will still be true."

Many a kinge, and manye a duke,
 And lorde of high degree,
 Did sue to that fayre ladye of love;
 But never shee wolde them nee.

When manye a daye was past and gone,
 Ne comferte she colde finde,
 The kynge proclaimed a tourneament,
 To cheere his daughters mind:

And there came lords, and there came knights,
 Fro manye a farre countryè,
 To break a spere for theyr ladyes love
 Before that faire ladyè.

And many a ladye there was sette
 In purple and in palle:
 But fair Christabelle soe woe-begone
 Was the fayrest of them all.

Then manye a knight was mickle of might
 Before his ladye gaye;
 But a stranger wight, whom no man knewe,
 He wan the prize eche daye.

His acton it was all of blacke,
His hewberke, and his sheelde,
Ne noe man wist whence he did come,
Ne noe man knewe where he had gone,
When they came from the feelde.

And now three days were prestlye past
In feates of chivalrye,
When lo upon the fourth morninge
A sorrowfulle sight they see.

A hugye giaunt stiffe and starke,
All foule of limbe and lere;
Two gogging eyen like fire farden,
A mouthe from eare to eare.

Before him came a dwarffe full lowe,
That waited on his knee,
And at his backe five heads he bare,
All wan and pale of blee.

“Sir,” quoth the dwarffe, and louted lowe,
“Behold that hend Soldain!
Behold these heads I beare with me!
They are kings which he hath slain.

“The Eldridge knight is his own cousine
Whom a knight of thine hath shent:
And hee is come to avenge his wrong,
And to thee, all thy knightes among,
Defiance here hath sent.

“But yette he will appease his wrath
Thy daughters love to winne;
And but thou yeelde him that fayre mayd,
Thy halls and towers must brenne.

“Thy head, syr king, must goe with mee;
Or else thy daughter deere;
Or else within these lists soe broad
Thou must finde him a peere.”

The king he turned him round aboute,
And in his heart was woe:
“Is there never a knyghte of my round tablè,
This matter will undergoe?”

“Is there never a knyghte amongst yee all
Will fight for my daughter and mee?
Whoever will fight yon grimme soldàn,
Right fair his meedè shall bee.

“For hee shall have my broad lay-lands,
And of my crowne be heyre;
And he shall winne fayre Christabelle
To be his wedded fere.”

But every knyghte of his round tablè
Did stand both still and pale:
For whenever they lookt on the grim soldàn,
It made their hearts to quail.

All woe-begone was that fayre ladyè,
When she sawe no helpe was nye:
She cast her thought on her owne true-love,
And the teares gusht from her eye.

Up then sterte the stranger knyghte,
Sayd, “ladye, be not affrayd:
Ile fight for thee with this grimme soldàn,
Thoughe he be unmacklye made.

“And if thou wilt lend me the Eldridge sworde,
That lyeth within thy bowre,
I trust in Christe for to slay this fiende,
Thoughe he be stiffe in stowre.”

“Goe fetch him downe the Eldridge sworde,”
The king he cryde, “with speede:
Nowe heaven assist thee, courteous knyghte;
My daughter is thy meede.”

The gyaunt he stepped into the lists,
And said, “Awaye, awaye:
I swear, as I am the hend soldàn,
Thou letttest me here all daye.”

Then forthe the stranger knight he came
 In his blacke armour dight:
 The ladye sighed a gentle sighe,
 "That this were my true knighte!"

And nowe the gyaunt and knighte be mett
 Within the lists soe broad;
 And now with swordes soe sharp of steele,
 They gan to lay on load.

The soldan strucke the knighte a stroke,
 That made him reele asyde;
 Then woe-begone was that fayre ladye,
 And thrice she deeply sighde.

The soldan strucke a second stroke,
 And made the blude to flowe:
 All pale and wan was that ladye fayre,
 And thrice she wept for woe.

The soldan strucke a third fell stroke,
 Which brought the knight on his knee:
 Sad sorrow pierced that ladyes heart,
 And she shriekt loud shriekings three.

The knighte he leapt upon his feete,
 All recklesse of the pain:
 Quoth hee, "But heaven be now my speede,
 Or else I shall be slaine."

He grasped his sworde with mayne and mighte,
 And spying a secrette part,
 He drave it into the soldan's syde,
 And pierced him to the heart.

Then all the people gave a shoute,
 When they sawe the soldan falle:
 The ladye wept, and thanked Christ,
 That had reskewed her from thrall.

And nowe the kinge with all his barons
 Rose uppe from offe his seate,
 And down he stepped into the listes,
 That curteous knighte to greete.

But he for payne and lack of bloude
Was fallen into a swounde,
And there all walteringe in his gore,
Lay lifelesse on the grounde.

“Come downe, come downe, my daughter deare,
Thou art a leech of skille;
Farre lever had I lose halfe my landes,
Than this good knighte sholde spille.”

Downe then steppeth that fayre ladye
To helpe him if she maye;
But when she did his beavere raise,
“It is my life, my lord,” she sayes,
And shriekte and swounde awaye.

Sir Cauline juste lifte up his eyes
When he heard his ladye crye,
“O ladye, I am thine owne true love;
For thee I wisht to die.”

Then giving her one partinge looke,
He closed his eyes in death,
Ere Christabelle, that ladye milde,
Begane to draw her breathe.

But when she found her comelye knighte
Indeed was dead and gone,
She layde her pale cold cheeke to his,
And thus she made her moane:

“O staye, my deare and onlye lord,
For mee thy faithfulle feere;
'Tis meet that I shold followe thee,
Who hast bought my love soe deare.”

Then fayntinge in a deadlye swoune,
And with a deep-fette sighe,
That burst her gentle hearte in twayne
Fayre Christabelle did dye.

KING ESTMERE.

HEARKEN to me, gentlemen,
 Come and you shall heare;
 Ile tell you of two of the boldest brethren
 That ever borne y-were.

The tone of them was Adler younge,
 The tother was Kyng Estmere;
 The were as bolde men in their deeds,
 As any were farr and neare.

As they were drinking ale and wine
 Within Kyng Estmeres halle:
 "When will ye marry a wyfe, brothèr,
 A wyfe to glad us all?"

Then bespake him Kyng Estmere,
 And answered him hastilee:
 "I know not that ladye in any land
 That's able to marry with mee."

"Kyng Adland hath a daughter, brother,
 Men call her bright and sheene;
 If I were kyng here in your stead,
 That ladye shold be my queene."

Saies, "Reade me, reade me, deare brother,
 Throughout merry Englànd,
 Where we might find a messenger
 Betwixt us towè to sende."

Saies, "You shal ryde yourselfe, brothèr,
 Ile beare you companye;
 Many throughe fals messengers are deceived,
 And I feare lest soe shold wee."

Thus the renisht them to ryde
 Of twoe good renisht steeds,
 And when the came to King Adlands halle,
 Of redd gold shone their weeds.

And when they came to Kyng Adlands hall
Before the goodlye gate,
There they found good Kyng Adlånd
Rearing himselfe theratt.

“Now Christ thee save, good Kyng Adlånd;
Now Christ you save and see,”
Sayd, “You be welcome, King Estmere,
Right hartilye to mee.”

“You have a daughter,” said Adler younge,
“Men call her bright and sheene,
My brother wold marrye her to his wiffe,
Of Englande to be queene.”

“Yesterday was att my deere daughter
Syr Bremor the Kyng of Spayne;
And then she nicked him of naye,
And I doubt sheele do you the same.”

“The Kyng of Spayne is a foule paynim,
And 'leeveth on Mahound;
And pitye it were that fayre ladye
Shold marrye a heathen hound.”

“But grant to me,” sayes Kyng Estmere,
“For my love I you praye;
That I may see your daughter deere
Before I goe hence awaye.”

“Although itt is seven yeers and more
Since my daughter was in halle,
She shall come once downe for your sake
To glad my guestès alle.”

Downe then came that mayden fayre,
With ladyes laced in pall,
And halfe a hundred of bold knightes,
To bring her from bowre to hall;
And as many gentle squiers,
To tend upon them all.

The talents of golde were on her head sette,
Hanged low downe to her knee;
And everye ring on her small fingèr
Shone of the chrystall free.

Saies, "God you save, my deere madàm ;"
 Saies, "God you save and see,"
 Said, "you be welcome, Kyng Estmere,
 Right welcome unto mee.

"And if you love me, as you saye,
 Soe well and hartilèe,
 All that ever you are comen about
 Soone sped now itt shal bee."

Then bespake her father deare :
 "My daughter, I saye naye ;
 Remember well the Kyng of Spayne ;
 What he sayd yesterdaye.

"He wold pull downe my halles and castles,
 And reave me of my lyfe,
 I cannot blame him if he doe,
 If I reave him of his wyfe."

"Your castles and your towres, father,
 Are stronglye built aboute ;
 And therefore of the King of Spaine
 We neede not stande in doubt.

"Plight me your troth, nowe, Kyng Estmère,
 By heaven and your righte hand,
 That you will marrye me to your wyfe,
 And make me queene of your land."

Then King Estmere he plight his troth
 By heaven and his right hand,
 That he wolde marrye her to his wyfe,
 And make her queene of his land.

And he tooke leave of that ladye fayre,
 To goe to his owne countree,
 To fetch him dukes and lordes and knightes,
 That married they might bee.

They had not ridden scant a myle,
 A myle forthe of the towne,
 But in did come the Kyng of Spayne,
 With kempès many a one,

But in did come the Kyng of Spayne,
 With manye a bold baròne,
 Tone day to marrye King Adlands daughter,
 Tother daye to carrye her home.

Shee sent one after Kyng Estmère
 In all the spede might bee,
 That he must either turne againe and fighte,
 Or goe home and loose his ladye.

One whyle then the page he went,
 Another while he ranne ;
 Till he had oretaken King Estmere,
 I wis, he never blanne.

“Tydings, tydings, Kyng Estmere !”
 “What tydinges nowe, my boye?”
 “O tydinges I can tell to you,
 That will you sore annoye.

“You had not ridden scant a mile,
 A mile out of the towne,
 But in did come the Kyng of Spayne
 With kempès many a one :

“But in did come the Kyng of Spayne
 With manye a bolde baròne,
 Tone daye to marrye King Adlands daughter,
 Tother daye to carry her home.

“My ladye fayre she greetes you well,
 And ever-more well by mee :
 You must either turne againe and fighte,
 Or goe home and loose your ladyè.”

Saies, “Reade me, reade me, deere brothèr,
 My reade shall ryse at thee,
 Whether it is better to turne and fighte,
 Or go home and loose my ladye.”

“Now hearken to me,” sayes Adler yonge,
 “And your reade must rise at me,
 I quicklye will devise a waye
 To sette thy ladye free.

“ My mother was a westerne woman,
 And learned in gramaryè,
 And when I learned at the schole,
 Something shee taught itt mee.

“ There growes an hearbe within this field,
 And iff it were but knowne,
 His color, which is whyte and redd,
 It will make blacke and browne :

“ His color, which is browne and blacke,
 Itt will make redd and whyte ;
 That sworde is not in all Englande,
 Upon his coate will byte.

“ And you shal be a harper, brother,
 Out of the north countrye ;
 And Ile be your boy, soe faine of fighte,
 And beare your harpe by your knee.

“ And you shal be the best harpèr,
 That ever tooke harpe in hand ;
 And I will be the best singèr,
 That ever sung in this lande.

“ Itt shal be written in our forheads
 All and in grammaryè,
 That we towe are the boldest men,
 That are in all Christentyè.”

And thus they renisht them to ryde,
 On tow good renish steedes ;
 And when they came to King Adlands hall,
 Of redd gold shone their weedes.

And whan they came to Kyng Adlands hall,
 Untill the fayre hall yate,
 There they found a proud portèr
 Rearing himselfe thereatt.

Sayes, “ Christ thee save, thou proud portèr ;”
 Sayes, “ Christ thee save and see.”
 “ Nowe you be welcome,” sayd the portèr,
 “ Of what land soever ye bee.”

“Wee beene harpers,” sayd Adler younge,
“Come out of the northe countrye ;
We beene come hither untill this place,
This proud weddinge for to see.”

Sayd, “And your color were white and redd,
As it is blacke and browne,
I wold saye King Estmere and his brother
Were comen untill this towne.”

Then they pulled out a ryng of gold,
Layd itt on the porters arme :
“And ever we will thee, proud portèr,
Thow wilt saye us no harme.”

Sore he looked on Kyng Estmère,
And sore he handled the ryng,
Then opened to them the fayre hall yates,
He lett for no kind of thyng.

Kyng Estmere he stabled his steede
Soe fayre att the hall bord ;
The froth, that came from his brydle bitte,
Light in King Bremors beard.

Saies, “Stable thy steed,” thou proud harpèr,”
Saies, “stable him in the stalle :
It doth not beseeme a proud harpèr
To stable him in a kyngs halle.”

“My ladde he is so lither,” he said,
“He will doe nought that’s meete ;
And is there any man in this hall
Were able him to beate ?”

“Thou speakst proud words,” sayes the King of Spaine,
“Thou harper, here to mee :
There is a man within this halle
Will beate thy ladd and thee.”

“O let that man come downe,” he said,
“A sight of him wold I see ;
And when hee hath beaten well my ladd,
Then he shall beate of mee.”

Downe then came the kemperye man
 And looked him in the eare ;
 For all the gold, that was under heaven,
 He durst not neigh him neare.

“ And how nowe, kempe,” said the Kyng of Spaine,
 “ And how what aileth thee ?”
 He saies, “ It is writt in his forehead
 All and in gramaryè,
 That for all the gold that is under heaven
 I dare not neigh him nye.”

Then Kyng Estmere puld forth his harpe,
 And plaid a pretty thinge :
 The ladye upstart from the borde,
 And wold have gone from the king.

“ Stay thy harpe, thou proud harpèr,
 For Gods love I pray thee,
 For and thou playes as thou beginns,
 Thou'lt till my bryde from mee.”

He stroake upon his harpe againe,
 And playd a pretty thinge ;
 The ladye lough a loud laughter,
 As shee sate by the king.

Saies, “ Sell me thy harpe, thou proud harper,
 And thy stringès all,
 For as many gold nobles thou shalt have
 A heere bee ringes in the hall.”

“ What wold ye doe with my harpe,” he sayd,
 “ If I did sell it yee ?”
 “ To playe my wiffè and mee a Fitt,
 When wedded together wee bee.”

“ Now sell me,” quoth hee, “ thy bryde soe gay,
 “ As shee sitts by thy knee,
 And as many gold nobles I will give,
 As leaves been on a tree.”

“ And what wold ye doe with my bryde soe gay,
 Iff I did sell her thee ?
 More seemelye it is for her fayre bodye
 To be married to me than thee.”

He played agayne both loud and shrille,
 And Adler he did syng,

“ O ladye, this is thy owne true love ;
 Noe harper, but a kyng.

“ O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
 As playnye thou mayest see ;
 And Ile rid thee of that foule paynim,
 Who partes thy love and thee.”

The lady looked, the ladye blushte,
 And blushte and lookt agayne,
 While Adler he hath drawne his brande,
 And hath the Sowdan slayne.

Up then rose the kemperye men,
 And loud they gan to crye :
 “ Ah ! traytors, yee have slayne our kyng,
 And therefore yee shall dye.”

Kyng Estmere threwe the harpe asyde,
 And swith he drew his brand ;
 And Estmere he, and Adler yonge
 Right stiffe in stour can stand.

And aye their swordes soe sore can byte,
 Throughe help of Gramaryè,
 That soone they have slayne the kemperye men,
 Or forst them forth to flee.

Kyng Estmere tooke that fayre ladyè,
 And marryed her to his wiffe,
 And brought her home to merry England
 With her to leade his life.

The word *Gramarye*, which occurs several times in the foregoing poem, is probably a corruption of the French word *Grimoire*, which signifies a conjuring book in the old French romances, or the art of necromancy itself.

SIR ALDINGAR.

OUR king he kept a false stewarde,
 Sir Aldingar they him call ;
 A falsèr steward than he was one,
 Servde not in bower nor hall.

He wolde have enticed our comely queene,
 Her deere worshippe to betraye :
 Our queene she was a good womàn,
 And evermore said him naye.

Sir Aldingar was wrothe in his mind,
 With her hee was never content,
 Till traitèrous meanes he colde devyse,
 In a fyer to have her brent.

There came a lazar to the kings gate,
 A lazar both blinde and lame :
 He took the lazar upon his backe,
 Him in the queenes bower has ta'en.

“ Lye still, lazàr, wheras thou lyst,
 Looke thou goe not hence away ;
 Ile make thee a whole man and a sound
 In two howers of the day.”¹

Then went him forth Sir Aldingar,
 And hyed him to our king :
 “ If I might have grace, as I have space,
 Sad tydings I could bring.”

“ Say on, say on, Sir Aldingar,
 Saye on the soothe to mee,”
 “ Our queene hath chosen a new new love,
 And shee will have none of thee.

“ If shee had chosen a right good knight,
 The lesse had been her shame ;
 But she hath chose her a lazar man,
 A lazar both blinde and lame.”

¹ He probably insinuates that the king should heal him by the power of touching for the King's Evil.

“ If this be true, thou Aldingar,
 The tyding thou tellest to me,
 Then will I make thee a rich rich knight,
 Rich both of golde and fee.

“ But if it be false, Sir Aldingar,
 As God nowe grant it bee!
 Thy body, I sweare by the holy rood,
 Shall hang on the gallows tree.”

He brought our king to the queenes chambèr,
 And opend to him the dore.
 A lodlye love, king Harry says,
 For our queene dame Elinore!

“ If thou were a man, as thou art none,
 Here on my sworde thoust dye;
 But a payre of new gallowes shall be built,
 And there shalt thou hang on hye.”

Forth then hyed our king, I wysse,
 And an angry man was hee;
 And soone he found queene Elinore,
 That bride so bright of blee.

“ Now God you save, our queene, madame,
 And Christ you save and see;
 Heere you have chosen a newe newe love,
 And you will have none of mee.

“ If you had chosen a right good knight,
 The lesse had been your shame:
 But you have chose you a lazar man,
 A lazar both blinde and lame.

Therefore a fyer there shall be built,
 And brent all shalt thou bee.”——

“ Now out alacke!” said our comly queene,
 “ Sir Aldingar’s false to mee.

“ Now out alacke!” sayd our comely queene,
 “ My heart with grieve will brast.
 I had thought dreams had never been true;
 I have proved them true at last.

“ I dreamt in my dream on Thursday eve,
 In my bed wheras I laye,
 I dreamt a grype and a grimlie beast
 Had carryed my crowne awaye ;

“ My gorgett and my kirtle of golde,
 And all my faire head-geere ;
 And he wold worrye me with his tush
 And to his nest y-beare :

“ Saving there came a little ‘gray’ hawke,
 A merlin him they call,
 Which untill the grounde did strike the grype,
 That dead he downe did fall.

“ Giffe I were a man, as now I am none,
 A battell wold I prove,
 To fight with that traitor Aldingar ;
 Att him I cast my glove.

“ But seeing I’m able noe battell to make,
 My liege, grant me a knight
 To fight with that traitor Sir Aldingar,
 To maintaine me in my right.”

“ Now forty dayes I will give thee
 To seeke thee a knight therin :
 If thou find not a knight in forty dayes
 Thy bodye it must brenn.”

Then shee sent east, and shee sent west,
 By north and south bedeene :
 But never a champion colde shee find,
 Wolde fight with that knight soe keene.

Now twenty days were spent and gone,
 Noe helpe there might be had ;
 Many a teare shed our comelye queene,
 And aye her hart was sad.

Then came one of the queenes damsèlles,
 And knelt upon her knee,
 “ Cheare up, cheare up, my gracious dame,
 I trust yet helpe may be :

“ And here I will make mine avowe,
 And with the same me binde ;
 That never will I return to thee,
 Till I some helpe may finde.”

Then forthe she rode on a faire palfràye
 O'er hill and dale about :
 But never a champion colde she finde,
 Wolde fighte with that knight so stout.

And nowe the daye drewe on a pace,
 When our good queene must dye ;
 All woe-begone was that faire damselle,
 When she found no helpe was nye.

All woe-begone was that faire damselle,
 And the salt teares fell from her eye :
 When lo ! as she rode by a rivers side,
 She met with a tinye boye.

A tinye boye she mette God wot,
 All clad in mantle of golde ;
 He seemed noe more in mans likenesse,
 Then a childe of four yeere olde.

“ Why grieve you, damselle faire,” he sayd,
 “ And what doth cause you moane ?”
 The damsell scant wolde deigne a looke,
 But fast she pricked on.

“ Yet turn againe, thou faire damselle,
 And greeete thy queene from mee :
 When bale is att hyst, boote is nyest,
 Nowe helpe enoughe may bee.

“ Bid her remember what she dreamt
 In her bedd, wheras shee laye ;
 How when the grype and the grimly beast
 Wolde have carried her crowne awaye,

“ Even then there came the little gray hawke,
 And saved her from his clawes :
 Then bidd the queene be merry at hart,
 For heaven will fende her cause.”

Back then rode that faire damselle,
 And her hart it lept for glee :
 And when she told her gracious dame,
 A gladd woman then was shee.

But when the appointed day was come,
 No helpe appeared nye :
 Then woeful, woeful was her hart,
 And the teares stood in her eye.

And nowe a fyer was built of wood ;
 And a stake was made of tree ;
 And nowe Queene Elinor forth was led,
 A sorrowful sight to see.

Three times the herault he waved his hand,
 And three times spake on hye :
 " Giff any good knight will fende this dame,
 Come forth, or she must dye."

No knight stood forth, no knight there came,
 No helpe appeared nye :
 And nowe the fyer was lighted up,
 Queen Elinor she must dye.

And now the fyer was lighted up,
 As hot as hot might bee ;
 When riding upon a little white steed,
 The tynye boy they see.

" Away with that stake, away with those brands,
 And loose our comlye queene :
 I am come to fight with Sir Aldingar,
 And prove him a traitor keene."

Forthe then stood Sir Aldingar,
 But when he saw the chylde,
 He laughed, and scoffed, and turned his backe,
 And weened he had been beguylde.

" Now turne, now turne thee, Aldingar,
 And eyther fighte or flee ;
 I trust that I shall avenge the wronge,
 Though I am so small to see."

The boye pulld forth a well good sworde
 So gilt it dazzed the ee ;
 The first stroke stricken at Aldingar
 Smote off his leggs by the knee.

“Stand up, stand up, thou false traitòr,
 And fight upon thy feete,
 For and thou thrive, as thou begin'st,
 Of height wee shall be meete.”

“A priest, a priest,” sayes Aldingar,
 “While I am a man alive.
 “A priest, a priest,” sayes Aldingar,
 “Me for to houzle and shrive.

“Forgive, forgive me, queene, madame,
 The short time I must live :”—
 “Nowe Christ forgive thee, Aldingar,
 As freely I forgive.”

“Here take thy queene, our King Harryè,
 And love her as thy life,
 For never had a king in Christentye,
 A truer and fairer wife.”

King Henrye ran to claspe his queene,
 And loosed her full sone ;
 Then turnd to look for the tinye boye ;
 —The boye was vanisht and gone.

But first he had touchd the lazar man,
 And stroakt him with his hand :
 The lazar under the gallowes tree
 All whole and sounde did stand.

The lazar under the gallowes tree
 Was comelye, straight and tall ;
 King Henrye made him his head stewàrde
 To wayte withinn his hall.

THE GENTLE HERDSMAN.

GENTLE herdsman, tell to me,
 Of curtesy I thee pray,
 Unto the towne of Walsingham
 Which is the right and ready way.

“Unto the towne of Walsingham
 The way is hard for to be gon ;
 And verry crooked are those pathes
 For you to find out all alone.”

Weere the miles doubled thrise,
 And the way never soe ill,
 Itt were not enough for mine offence ;
 Itt is soe grievous and soe ill.

“Thy yeeares are young, thy face is faire,
 Thy witts are weake, thy thoughts are greene ;
 Time hath not given thee leave, as yett,
 For to committ so great a sinne.”

Yes, herdsman, yes, soe woldest thou say,
 If thou knewest soe much as I ;
 My witts, and thoughts, and all the rest,
 Have well deserved for to dye.

I am not what I seeme to bee,
 My clothes and sexe doe differ farr :
 I am a woman, woe is me !
 Born to greeffe and irksome care.

For my beloved, and well-beloved,
 My wayward cruelty could kill ;
 And though my teares will nought avail,
 Most dearely I bewail him still.

He was the flower of noble wights,
 None ever more sincere colde bee ;
 Of comely mien and shape hee was,
 And tenderlye hee loved mee.

When thus I saw he loved me well,
 I grewe so proud his paine to see,
 That I, who did not know myselfe,
 Thought scorne of such a youth as hee;

¹ And grew soe coy and nice to please,
 As women's lookes are often soe,
 He might not kisse, nor hand forsooth,
 Unlesse I will'd him soe to doe.

Thus being wearyed with delayes
 To see I pittyed not his greeffe,
 He gott him to a secrett place,
 And there he dyed without releeffe.

And for his sake these weeds I weare,
 And sacrifice my tender age;
 And every day Ile begg my bread,
 To undergo this pilgrimage.

Thus every day I fast and pray,
 And ever will doe till I dye;
 And gett me to some secrett place,
 For soe did hee, and soe will I.

Now, gentle herdsman, aske no more,
 But keepe my secretts I thee pray:
 Unto the towne of Walsingham
 Show me the right and ready way.

¹ Three of the following stanzas have been finely paraphrased by Dr. Goldsmith, in his ballad of "Edwin and Emma;" the reader may here compare them with the original.

'And' still I try'd each fickle art,
 Importunate and vain:
 And while his passion touch'd my heart,
 I triumph'd in his pain.

Till quite dejected with my scorn
 He left me to my pride;
 And sought a solitude forlorn,
 In secret, where he dy'd.

But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
 And well my life shall pay;
 I'll seek the solitude he sought,
 And stretch me where he lay.

And there forlorn despairing hid,
 I'll lay me down and die;
 'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
 And so for him will I.

"Now goe thy wayes, and God before!
 For he must ever guide thee still:
 Turne downe that dale, the right hand path,
 And soe, faire pilgrim, fare thee well!"

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLIN 'A' DALE.

COME listen to me, you gallants so free,
 All you that love mirth for to hear,
 And I will tell you of a bold outlâw,
 That lived in Nottinghamshire.

As Robin Hood in the forest stood,
 All under the green-wood tree,
 There he was aware of a brave young man,
 As fine as fine might be.

The youngster was cloathed in scarlet red,
 In scarlet fine and gay;
 And he did frisk it over the plain,
 And chanted a round-de-lay.

As Robin Hood next morning stood
 Amongst the leaves so gay,
 There did he espy the same young man
 Come drooping along the way.

The scarlet he wore the day before
 It was clean cast away;
 And at every step he fetcht a sigh,
 "Alack and a-well a-day!"

Then stepped forth brave Little John,
 And "Nicke," the miller's son,
 Which made the young man bend his bow,
 When as he saw them come.

"Stand off, stand off," the young man said,
 "What is your will with me?"
 "You must come before our master straight,
 Under yon green-wood tree."

And when he came bold Robin before,

Robin askt him courteously,

“O, hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?”

“I have no money,” the young man said,

“But five shillings and a ring;

And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wedding.

“Yesterday I should have married a wife,

But she from me was ta'en,

And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain.”

“What is thy name?” then said Robin Hood,

“Come tell me, without any fail.”

“Well if you will have it,” then said the young man,

“My name it is Allin a Dale.”

“What wilt thou give me,” said Robin Hood,

“In ready gold or fee,

To help thee to thy true love again,
And deliver her unto thee?”

“I have no money,” then quoth the young man,

“No ready gold nor fee,

But I will swear upon a book
Thy true servant for to be.”

“How many miles is it to thy true love?

Come tell me without guile.”

“By the faith of my body,” then said the young man,

“It is but five little mile.”

Then Robin he hasted over the plain,

He did neither stint nor lin,

Until he came unto the church,
Where Allin should keep his wedding.

“What hast thou here?” the bishop then said,

“I prithee now tell unto me.”

“I am a bold harper,” quoth Robin Hood,

“And the best in the north country.”

“ O welcome, O welcome,” the bishop he said,
 “ That music best pleaseth me.”
 “ You shall have no music,” quoth Robin Hood,
 “ Till the bride and the bridegroom I see.”

With that came in a wealthy knight,
 Which was both grave and old,
 And after him a finikin lass,
 Did shine like the glistering gold.

“ This is not a fit match,” quod bold Robin Hood,
 “ That you do seem to make here,
 For since we are come into the church,
 The bride shall choose her own dear.”

Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
 And blew blasts two or three ;
 When four and twenty bowmen bold
 Came leaping over the lee.

And when they came into the church-yard,
 Marching all on a row,
 The first man was Allin a Dale,
 To give bold Robin his bow.

“ This is thy true love,” Robin he said,
 “ Young Allin, as I hear say,
 And you shall be married at ‘ this ’ same time,
 Before we depart away.”

“ That shall not be,” the bishop he said,
 “ For thy word shall not stand ;
 They shall be three times askt in the church,
 As the law is of our land.”

Robin Hood pull’d off the bishop’s coat,
 And put it upon Little John ;
 “ By the faith of my body,” then Robin said,
 This ‘ cloth ’ doth make thee a man.”

When Little John went into the quire
 The people began to laugh ;
 He askt them seven times in the church,
 Lest three times should not be enough.

“ Who gives me this maid ? ” said Little John.
 Quoth Robin Hood, “ That do I ;
 And he that takes her from Allin a Dale,
 Full dearly he shall her buy . ”

And thus having ended this merry wedding,
 The bride lookt like a queen ;
 And so they return'd to the merry green-wood,
 Amongst the leaves so green .

THE HEIR OF LINNE.

Part the First.

LITHE and listen, gentlemen,
 To sing a song I will beginne :
 It is of a lord of faire Scotland,
 Which was the unthrifty heire of Linne .

His father was a right good lord,
 His mother a lady of high degree ;
 But they, alas ! were dead, him froe,
 And he lov'd keeping companie .

To spend the daye with merry cheare,
 To drinke and revell every night,
 To card and dice from eve to morne,
 It was, I ween, his hearts delighte .

To ride, to runne, to rant, to roare,
 To always spend and never spare,
 I wott, an' it were the king himselve,
 Of gold and fee he mote be bare .

So fares the unthrifty Lord¹ of Linne
 Till all his gold is gone and spent ;
 And he maun sell his landes so broad,
 His house, and landes, and all his rent .

¹ “ Lord ” means here probably nothing more than the Scotch “ Laird,” or landed proprietor.

His father had a keen stewàrde,
 And John o' the Scales was called hee :
 But John is become a gentel-man,
 And John has gott both gold and fee.

Sayes, " Welcome, welcome, Lord of Linne,
 Let nought disturb thy merry cheere ;
 Iff thou wilt sell thy landes soe broad,
 Good store of gold I'll give thee heere."

" My gold is gone, my money is spent,
 My lande nowe take it unto thee :
 Give me the golde, good John o' the Scales,
 And thine for aye my lande shall bee."

Then John he did him to record draw,
 And John he cast him a gods-pennie ;¹
 But for every pounce that John agreed,
 The lande, I wis, was well worth three.

He told him the gold upon the borde,
 He was right glad his land to winne ;
 " The gold is thine, the land is mine,
 And now I'll be the Lord of Linne."

Thus he hath sold his land soe broad,
 Both hill and holt, and moore and fenne,
 All but a poore and lonesome lodge,
 That stood far off in a lonely glenne.

For soe he to his father hight.
 " My sonne, when I am gone," sayd hee,
 " Then thou wilt spend thy lande so broad,
 And thou wilt spend thy gold so free :

" But sweare me nowe upon the roode,
 That lonesome lodge thou 'lt never spend ;
 For when all the world doth frown on thee,
 Thou there shalt find a faithful friend."

¹ i. e. Earnest-money; from the French "Denier à Dieu." At this day, when application is made to the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle to accept an exchange of the tenant under one of their leases, a piece of silver is presented by the new tenant. which is still called a God's-penny.

“ The heire of Linne is full of golde :
And come with me, my friends,” sayd hee,
Let’s drinke, and rant, and merry make,
And he that spares, ne’er mote he thee.”

They ranted, drank, and merry made,
Till all his gold it waxed thinne ;
And then his friendes they slunk away ;
They left the unthrifty heire of Linne.

He had never a penny left in his purse,
Never a penny left but three,
And one was brass, another was lead,
And another it was white monèy.

“ Nowe well-aday,” sayd the heire of Linne,
“ Nowe well-adaye, and woe is mee,
For when I was the Lord of Linne,
I never wanted gold nor fee.

“ But many a trustye friend have I,
And why shold I feel dole or care ?
I’ll borrow of them all by turnes,
Soe need I not be never bare.”

But one, I wis, was not at home ;
Another had payd his gold away ;
Another call’d him thriftless loone,
And bade him sharpely wend his way.

“ Now well-aday,” sayd the heire of Linne,
“ Now well-aday, and woe is me ;
For when I had my landes so broad,
On me they liv’d right merrilee.

“ To beg my bread from door to door,
I wis, it were a brenning shame :
To rob and steal it were a sinne :
To worke my limbs I cannot frame.

“ Now I’ll away to the lonesome lodge,
For there my father bade me wend :
When all the world shold frown on mee
I there shold find a trusty friend.”-

Part the Second.

AWAY then hyed the heir of Linne
 O'er hill and holt, and moor and fenne,
 Untill he came to the lonesome lodge,
 That stood so lowe in a lonely glenne.

He looked up, he looked downe,
 In hope some comfort for to winne :
 But bare and lothly were the walles.
 "Here's sorry cheare," quo' the heire of Linne.

The little windowe dim and darke
 Was hung with ivy, brere, and yewe :
 No shimmering sunn here ever shone ;
 No halesome breeze here ever blew.

No chair, ne table he mote spye,
 No chearful hearth, ne welcome bed,
 Nought save a rope with renning noose,
 That dangling hung up o'er his head.

And over it in broad lettèrs,
 These words were written so plain to see :
 "Ah! gracelesse wretch, hast spent thine all,
 And brought thyselve to penurie ?

"All this my boding mind misgave,
 I therefore left this trusty friend :
 Let it now sheeld thy foule disgrace,
 And all thy shame and sorrows end."

Sorely shent wi' this rebuke,
 Sorely shent was the heire of Linne ;
 His heart, I wis, was near to brast
 With guilt and sorrowe, shame and sinne.

Never a word spake the heire of Linne,
 Never a word he spake but three :
 "This is a trusty friend indeed,
 And is right welcome unto mee."

Then round his necke the corde he drewe,
 And sprang aloft with his bodie :
 When lo ! the ceiling burst in twaine,
 And to the ground come tumbling hee.

Astonyed lay the heire of Linne,
 Ne knewe if he were live or dead :
 At length he looked, and saw a bille,
 And in it a key of gold so redd.

He took the bille, and lookt it on,
 Strait good comfort found he there ;
 Itt told him of a hole in the wall,
 In which there stood three chests in-fere.

Two were full of the beaten golde,
 The third was full of white monèy ;
 And over them in broad lettèrs
 These words were written so plaine to see :

“ Once more, my sonne, I sett thee clere ;
 Amend thy life and follies past ;
 For but thou amend thee of thy life,
 That rope must be thy end at last.”

“ And let it bee,” sayd the heire of Linne ;
 “ And let it bee, unless I amend,
 For here I will make mine avow,
 This reade shall guide me to the end.”

Away then went with a merry cheare,
 Away then went the heir of Linne ;
 I wis, he neither ceas'd ne blanne,
 Till John o' the Scales house he did winne.

And when he came to John o' the Scales,
 Upp at the speere¹ then looked hee ;
 There sate three lords upon a rowe,
 Were drinking of the wine so free.

¹ Perhaps the hole in the door or window, by which it was *speered*, i. e. sparred, fastened, or shut.—In Bale's 2d Part of the Acts of Eng. Notaries, we have this phrase, (fol. 38.) “ The dore therof oft tymes opened and *speared* agayne.”

And John himself sate at the bord-head,
 Because now lord of Linne was hee.
 "I pray thee," he said, "good John o' the Scales,
 One forty pence for to lend mee."

"Away, away, thou thriftless loone ;
 Away, away, this may not bee :
 For Heavens curse on my head," he sayd,
 "If ever I trust thee one pennie."

Then bespake the heire of Linne,
 To John o' the Scales wife then spake he :
 "Madame, some almes on me bestowe,
 I pray for sweet saint Charitie."

"Away, away, thou thriftless loone,
 I swear thou gettest no almes of mee ;
 For if we shold hang any losel heere,
 The first we wold begin with thee."

Then bespake a good fellowe,
 Which sat at John o' the Scales his bord ;
 Sayd, "Turn againe, thou heire of Linne ;
 Some time thou wast a well good lord :

"Some time a good fellow thou hast been,
 And sparedst not thy gold and fee ;
 Therefore I'll lend thee forty pence,
 And other forty if need bee.

"And ever, I pray thee, John o' the Scales,
 To let him sit in thy companie :
 For well I wot thou hadst his land,
 And a good bargain it was to thee."

Up then spake him John o' the Scales,
 All woud he answer'd him againe :
 "Now Heavens curse on my head," he sayd,
 "But I did lose by that bargaine.

"And here I proffer thee, heire of Linne,
 Before these lords so faire and free,
 Thou shalt have it backe again better cheape,
 By a hundred markes, than I had it of thee.

“I drawe you to record, lords,” he said,
With that he cast him a gods-pennie.
“Now by my fay,” sayd the heire of Linne,
“And here, good John, is thy monèy.”

And he pull’d forth three bagges of gold,
And layd them down upon the bord :
All woe begone was John o’ the Scales,
Soe shent he cold say never a word.

He told him forth the good red gold,
He told it forth wi’ mickle dinne.
“The gold is thine, the land is mine,
And now I’m againe the Lord of Linne.”

Sayes, “Have thou here, thou good fellòwe,
Forty pence thou didst lend mee :
Now I am againe the Lord of Linne,
And forty pounds I will give thee.

“I’ll make the keeper of my forrest,
Both of the wild deere and the tame ;
For but I reward thy bounteous heart,
I wis, good fellowe, I were to blame.”

“Now welladay!” sayth Joan o’ the Scales ;
“Now welladay! and woe is my life!
Yesterday I was Lady of Linne,
Now I’m but John of the Scales his wife.”

“Now fare thee well,” sayd the heire of Linne ;
“Farewell now, John o’ the Scales,” said hee :
“Heaven’s curse light on me, if ever again
I bring my lands in jeopardy.”

THE BEGGAR'S DAUGHTER OF BEDNALL-GREEN.

Part the First.

ITT was a blind beggar, had long lost his sight,
 He had a faire daughter of bewty most bright :
 And many a gallant brave suiter had shee,
 For none was soe comelye as pretty Bessee.

And though shee was of favor most faire,
 Yett seeing shee was but a poor beggars heyre,
 Of ancyent housekeepers despised was shee,
 Whose sonnes came as suitors to pretty Bessee.

Wherefore in great sorrow faire Bessy did say,
 " Good father and mother, let me goe away
 To seeke out my fortune, whatever itt bee."
 This suite then they granted to pretty Bessee.

Then Bessy, that was of bewtye soe bright,
 All cladd in gray russett, and late in the night
 From father and mother alone parted shee ;
 Who sighd and sobbed for pretty Bessee.

Shee went till shee came to Stratford-le-Bow ;
 Then knew shee not whither, nor which way to goe :
 With teares shee lamented her hard destinie,
 So sadd and soe heavy was pretty Bessee.

Shee kept on her journey untill it was day,
 And went unto Rumford along the hye way ;
 Where at the Queenes armes entertained was shee :
 Soe faire and wel favoured was pretty Bessee.

Shee had not been there a month to an end,
 But master and mistres and all was her friend :
 And every brave gallant, that once did her see,
 Was straight-way enamoured of pretty Bessee.

Great gifts they did send her of silver and gold,
 And in their songs daylye her love was extold ;
 Her bewtye was blazed in every degree ;
 Soe faire and soe comelye was pretty Bessee.

The young men of Rumford in her had their joy,
Shee shewed herself curteous, and modestlye coye ;
And at her commandment still wold they bee ;
Soe fayre and soe comlye was pretty Bessee.

Foure suitors att once unto her did goe ;
They craved her favor, but still she sayd noe ;
" I wold not wish gentles to marry with mee."
Yett ever they honored pretty Bessee.

The first of them was a gallant young knight,
And he came unto her disguise in the night ;
The second a gentleman of good degree,
Who wooed and sued for pretty Bessee.

A merchant of London, whose wealth was not small,
He was the third suiter, and proper withall :
Her masters own sonne the fourth man must bee,
Who vow'd he would dye for pretty Bessee.

" And, if thou wilt marry with mee," quoth the knight,
" I'll make thee a ladye with joy and delight ;
My hart's so intrall'd by thy bewtie,
That soone I shall dye for pretty Bessee."

The gentleman sayd, " Come, marry with mee,
As fine as a ladye my Bessy shal bee :
My life is distressed : O heare mee," quoth hee ;
" And grant me thy love, my pretty Bessee."

" Let me bee thy husband," the merchant cold say,
" Thou shalt live in London both gallant and gay ;
My shippes shall bring home rych jewells for thee,
" And I will for ever love pretty Bessee."

Then Bessy shee sighed, and thus she did say :
" My father and mother I meane to obey ;
First gett their good will, and be faithfull to mee,
And you shall enjoye your pretty Bessee."

To every one this answer shee made,
Wherefore unto her they joyfullye sayd,
" This thing to fulfill wee all doe agree ;
But where dwells thy father, my pretty Bessee ?"

"My father," shee said, "is soone to be seene:
The seely blind beggar of Bednall-greene,
That daylye sits begging for charitie,
He is the good father of pretty Bessee.

"His markes and his tokens are knowen very well;
He alwayes is led with a dogg and a bell:
A seely olde man, God knoweth, is hee,
Yett hee is the father of pretty Bessee."

"Nay then," quoth the merchant, "thou art not for mee:"
"Nor," quoth the innholder, "my wiffe thou shalt bee:"
"I lothe," sayd the gentle, "a beggars degree,
And therefore, adewe, my pretty Bessee!"

"Why then," quoth the knight, "hap better or worse,
I waighe not true love by the waight of the pursse,
And bewtye is bewtye in every degree;
Then welcome unto me, my pretty Bessee.

"With thee to thy father forthwith I will goe."
"Nay soft," quoth his kinsmen, "it must not be soe;
A poor beggars daughter noe ladye shall bee,
Then take thy adew of pretty Bessee."

But soone after this, by breake of the day,
The knight had from Rumford stole Bessy away.
The younge men of Rumford, as thicke might bee,
Rode after to feitch againe pretty Bessee.

As swifte as the winde to ryde they were seene,
Untill they came neare unto Bednall-greene;
And as the knight lighted most courteouslie
They all fought against him for pretty Bessie.

But rescew came speedilye over the plaine,
Or else the young knight for his love had been slaine.
This fray being ended, then straitway he see
His kinsmen come rayling at pretty Bessee.

Then spake the blind beggar, "Although I bee poore,
Yett rayle not against my child at my own doore:
Though shee be not decked in velvett and pearle,
Yett will I dropp angells with you for my girle.

“ And then, if my gold may better her birthe,
 And equall the gold that you lay on the earth,
 Then neyther rayle nor grudge you to see
 The blind beggars daughter a lady to bee.

“ But first you shall promise, and have itt well knowne,
 The gold that you drop shall all be your owne.”
 With that they replied, “ Contented bee wee.”
 “ Then here's,” quoth the beggar, “ for pretty Bessee.”

With that an angell he cast on the ground,
 And dropped in angels ful three thousand pound ;
 And oftentimes itt was proved most plaine,
 For the gentlemens one the beggar droppt twayne:

Soe that the place, wherein they did sitt,
 With gold it was covered every whitt,
 The gentlemen then having dropt all their store,
 Sayd, “ Now, beggar, hold, for wee have noe more.”

“ Thou hast fulfilled thy promise arright,
 Then marry,” quoth he, “ my girle to this knight ;
 And heere,” added hee, “ I will now throwe you downe
 A hundred pounds more to buy her a gowne.”

The gentlemen all, that this treasure had seene,
 Admired the beggar of Bednall-greene :
 And all those that were her suitors before,
 Their fleshe for very anger they tore.

Thus was fair Besse matched to the knight,
 And then made a ladye in others despite ;
 A fairer ladye there never was seene,
 Than the blind beggars daughter of Bednall-greene.

But of their sumptuous marriage and feast,
 What brave lords and knights thither were prest,
 The second fitt¹ shall set forth to your sight
 With marvellous pleasure and wished delight.

¹ The word *fit* for *part*, often occurs in our ancient ballads and metrical romances; which being divided into several parts for the convenience of singing them at public entertainments, were in the intervals of the feast sung by fits, or intermissions.

Part the Second.

OFF a blind beggars daughter most bright,
That late was betrothed unto a younge knight;
All the discourse therof you did see;
But now comes the wedding of pretty Bessee.

Within a gorgeous palace most brave,
Adorned with all the cost they cold have,
This wedding was kept most sumptuouslie,
And all for the creditt of pretty Bessee.

All kinds of dainties, and delicates sweete
Were bought for the banquet, as it was most meete;
Partridge, and plover, and venison most free,
Against the brave wedding of pretty Bessee.

This marriage through England was spread by report,
So that a great number thereto did resort
Of nobles and gentles in every degree;
And all for the fame of pretty Bessee.

To church then went this gallant younge knight;
His bride followed after, an angell most bright,
With troopes of ladyes, the like nere was seene
As went with sweete Bessy of Bednall-greene.

This marryage being solemnized then,
With musicke performed by the skilfullest men,
The nobles and gentles sate downe at that tyde,
Each one admiring the beautifull bryde.

Now, after the sumptuous dinner was done,
To talke, and to reason a number begunn:
They talkt of the blind beggars daughter most bright,
And what with his daughter he gave to the knight.

Then spake the nobles, "Much marveil have wee,
This jolly blind beggar wee cannot here see."
"My lords," quoth the bride, "my father's so base,
He is loth with his presence these states to disgrace."

“ The prayse of a woman in questyon to bringe
Before her own face, were a flattering thinge ;
But we thinke thy father's baseness,” quoth they,
“ Might by thy bewtye be cleane put awaye.”

They had noe sooner these pleasant words spoke,
But in comes the beggar cladd in a silke cloke ;
A faire velvet capp, and a fether had hee,
And now a musicyan forsooth he wold bee.

He had a daintye lute under his arme,
He touched the strings, which made such a charme,
Saies, “ Please you to heare any musicke of mee,
I'll sing you a song of pretty Bessee.”

With that his lute he twanged straightway,
And thereon begann most sweetlye to play ;
And after that lessons were playd two or three,
He strayn'd out this song most delicatelie.

“ A poore beggars daughter did dwell on a greene,
Who for her faireness might well be a queene :
A blithe bonny lasse, and a daintye was shee,
And many one called her pretty Bessee.

“ Her father hee had noe goods, nor noe land,
But beggd for a penny all day with his hand ;
And yett to her marriage he gave thousands three,
And still he hath somewhat for pretty Bessee.

“ And if any one here her birth doe disdaine,
Her father is ready, with might and with maine,
To proove shee is come of noble degree :
Therefore never flout att pretty Bessee.”

With that the lords and the companye round
With harty laughter were readye to swound ;
Att last said the lords, “ Full well wee may see,
The bride and the beggar's behoulden to thee.”

On this the bride all blushing did rise,
The pearlie dropps standing within her faire eyes,
“ O pardon my father, grave nobles,” quoth shee,
“ That throughe blind affection thus doteth on mee.

“ If this be thy father,” the nobles did say,
“ Well may he be proud of this happy day ;
Yett by his countenance well may wee see,
His birth and his fortune did never agree ;

“ And therefore, blind man, we pray thee bewray,
(And looke that the truth thou to us doe say,)
Thy birth and thy parentage, what itt may bee ;
For the love that thou bearest to pretty Bessee.”

“ Then give me leave, nobles and gentles, each one,
One song more to sing, and then I have done ;
And if that itt may not winn good report,
Then doe not give me a groat for my sport.”

“ Sir Simon de Montfort my subject shal bee ;
Once chiefe of all the great barons was hee,
Yet fortune so cruelle this lorde did abase,
Now loste and forgotten are hee and his race.

“ When the barons in armes did King Henrye oppose,
Sir Simon de Montfort their leader they chose ;
A leader of courage undaunted was hee,
And oft-times he made their enemyes flee.

“ At length in the battle on Eveshame plaine
The barons were routed, and Montfort was slaine ;
Most fatal that battel did prove unto thee,
Thoughe thou wast not borne then, my prettye Bessee !

“ Along with the nobles, that fell at that tyde,
His eldest son Henrye, who fought by his side,
Was felde by a blowe, he receivde in the fight !
A blowe that deprivde him for ever of sight.

“ Among the dead bodyes all lifelesse he laye,
Till evening drewe on of the following daye,
When by a yong ladye discoverd was hee ;
And this was thy mother, my prettye Bessee !

“ A barons faire daughter stept forth in the nighte
To search for her father, who fell in the fight,
And seeing yong Montfort, where gasping he laye,
Was moved with pitye, and brought him awaye.

“ In secrette she nurst him, and swaged his paine,
While he throughe the realme was beleevd to be slaine :
At length his faire bride she consented to bee,
And made him glad father of pretty Bessee.

“ And nowe lest oure foes our lives sholde betraye,
We clothed ourselves in beggars arraye;
Her jewelles shee solde, and hither came wee :
All our comfort and care was our pretty Bessee.

“ And here have we lived in fortunes despite,
Thoughe poore, yet contented with humble delighte :
Full forty winters thus have I beene
A silly blind beggar of Bednall-greene.

“ And here, noble lordes, is ended the song
Of one, that once to your own ranke did belong :
And thus have you learned a secrette from mee,
That ne'er had beene knowne, but for pretty Bessee.”

Now when the faire companye everye one,
Had heard the strange tale in the song he had showne,
They all were amazed, as well they might bee,
Both at the blinde beggar, and pretty Bessee.

With that the faire bride they all did embrace,
Saying, “ Sure thou art come of an honourable race,
Thy father likewise is of noble degree,
And thou art well worthy a lady to bee.”

Thus was the feast ended with joye and delighte,
A bridegroome most happy then was the younge knighte,
In joy and felicitie long lived hee,
All with his faire ladye, the pretty Bessee.

THE BONNIE BAIRNS.

THE lady she walk'd in yon wild wood
 Aneath the hollin tree,
 And she was aware of two bonnie bairns
 Were running at her knee.

The tane it pull'd a red, red rose,
 With a hand as soft as silk ;
 The other, it pull'd the lily pale,
 With a hand mair white than milk.

“ Now, why pull ye the red rose, fair bairns ?
 And why the white lily ? ”
 “ O we sue wi' them at the seat of grace,
 For the soul of thee, ladie ! ”

“ O bide wi' me, my twa bonnie bairns !
 I'll cleid ye rich and fine ;
 And all for the blaeberries of the wood,
 Yese hae white bread and wine. ”

She heard a voice, a sweet low voice,
 Say, “ Weans, ye tarry long ”—
 She stretch'd her hand to the youngest bairn,
 “ Kiss me before ye gang. ”

She sought to take a lily hand,
 And kiss a rosie chin—
 “ O, nought sae pure can bide the touch
 Of a hand red-wet wi' sin ! ”

The stars were shooting to and fro,
 And wild fire fill'd the air,
 As that lady follow'd thae bonny bairns
 For three lang hours and mair.

“ O ! where dwell ye, my ain sweet bairns ?
 I'm woe and weary grown ! ”
 “ O ! lady, we live where woe never is,
 In a land to flesh unknown. ”

There came a shape which seem'd to her
 As a rainbow 'mang the rain ;
 And sair these sweet babes pled for her,
 And they pled and pled in vain.

“And O! and O!” said the youngest babe,
 “My mother maun come in :”
 “And O! and O!” said the eldest babe,
 “Wash her twa hands frae sin.”

“And O! and O!” said the youngest babe,
 “She nursed me on her knee :”
 “And O! and O!” said the eldest babe,
 “She's a mither yet to me.”

“And O! and O!” said the babes baith,
 “Take her where waters rin,
 And white as the milk of her white breast,
 Wash her twa hands frae sin.”

WILLIAM AND MARGARET.

'Twas at the silent solemn hour,
 When night and morning meet,
 In glided Margaret's grimly ghost,
 And stood at William's feet.

Her face was like an April morn,
 Clad in a wintry cloud :
 And clay-cold was her lily hand,
 That held her sable shrowd.

So shall the fairest face appear,
 When youth and years are flown :
 Such is the robe that kings must wear,
 When death has reft their crown.

Her bloom was like the springing flower,
 That sips the silver dew ;
 The rose was budded in her cheek,
 Just opening to the view.

But love had, like the canker-worm,
Consum'd her early prime :
The rose grew pale, and left her cheek ;
She dy'd before her time.

“ Awake ! ” she cry'd, “ thy true love calls,
Come from her midnight grave ;
Now let thy pity hear the maid
Thy love refus'd to save.

“ This is the dark and dreary hour
When injur'd ghosts complain ;
Now yawning graves give up their dead,
To haunt the faithless swain.

“ Bethink thee, William, of thy fault,
Thy pledge and broken oath ;
And give me back my maiden vow,
And give me back my troth.

“ Why did you promise love to me,
And not that promise keep ?
Why did you swear mine eyes were bright,
Yet leave those eyes to weep ?

“ How could you say my face was fair,
And yet that face forsake ?
How could you win my virgin heart,
Yet leave that heart to break ?

“ Why did you say my lip was sweet,
And made the scarlet pale ?
And why did I, young witless maid,
Believe the flattering tale ?

“ That face, alas ! no more is fair ;
These lips no longer red :
Dark are my eyes, now clos'd in death,
And every charm is fled.

“ The hungry worm my sister is ;
This winding-sheet I wear :
And cold and weary lasts our night,
Till that last morn appear.

“ But hark ! the cock has warn’d me hence !
 A long and last adieu !
 Come see, false man, how low she lies,
 Who died for love of you.”

The lark sung loud ; the morning smil’d
 With beams of rosy red :
 Pale William shook in ev’ry limb,
 And raving left his bed.

He hyed him to the fatal place
 Where Margaret’s body lay :
 And stretch’d him on the grass-green turf,
 That wrapt her breathless clay :

And thrice he call’d on Margaret’s name,
 And thrice he wept full sore :
 Then laid his cheek to her cold grave,
 And word spake never more.

LADY ELSPAT.

“ How brent’s your brow, my lady Elspat !
 How gouden yellow is your hair !
 O’ a’ the maids o’ fair Scotland,
 There’s nane like lady Elspat fair.”

“ Perform your vows, sweet William,” she says,
 “ The vows which ye ha’ made to me ;
 And at the back o’ my mither’s castell,
 This night I’ll surely meet wi’ thee.”

But wae be to her brother’s page,
 That heard the words thir twa did say ;
 He’s tald them to her lady mither,
 Wha wrought sweet William mickle wae.

For she has ta’en him, sweet William,
 And she’s gar’d bind him wi’ his bow string,
 Till the red bluid o’ his fair body
 Frae ilka nail o’ his hand did spring.

O, it fell ance upon a time,
 That the Lord-justice came to town ;
 Out has she ta'en him, sweet William,
 Brought him before the Lord-justice boun'.

“ And what is the crime now, lady,” he says,
 That has by this young man been dane ?”

“ O he has broken my bonnie castell,
 That was weel biggit wi' lime and stane ;

“ And he has broken my bonnie coffers,
 That was weel bandit wi' aiken ban ;
 And he has stown my rich jewels ;
 I wot he has stown them every ane.”

Then out it spak' her Lady Elspat,
 As she sat by Lord-justice' knee ;
 “ Now ye ha'e told your tale, mither,
 I pray, Lord-justice, ye'll now hear me.

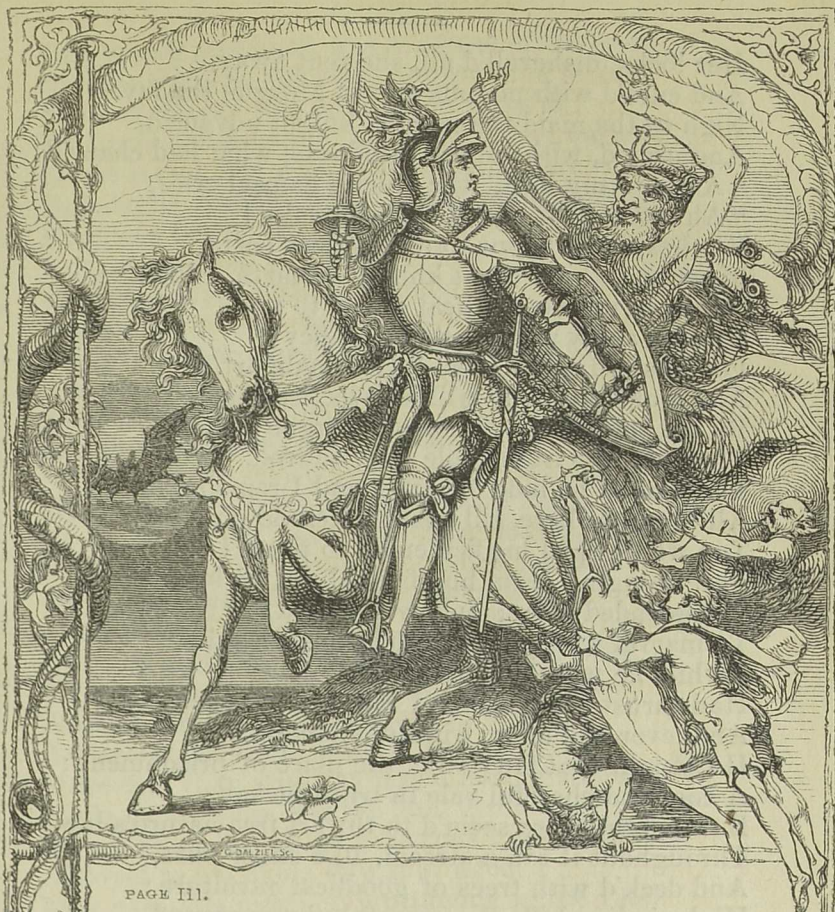
“ He hasna broken her bonnie castell,
 That was weel biggit wi' lime and stane ;
 Nor has he stown her rich jewels,
 For I wat she has them every ane.

“ But though he was my first true love,
 And though I had sworn to be his bride,
 'Cause he hadna a great estate,
 She would this way our loves divide.”

Syne out and spak' the Lord-justice,
 I wat the tear was in his e'e ;
 “ I see nae faut in this young man ;
 Sae loose his bands, and set him free ;

“ And tak' your love, now, Lady Elspat ;
 And my best blessin' you baith upon ;
 For gin he be your first true love,
 He is my eldest sister's son.

“ There stands a steed in my stable,
 Cost me baith gold and white mony ;
 Ye's get as mickle o' my free land
 As he'll ride about in a summer's day.”



PAGE III.

Sir Launcelot du Lake.

THE stout Sir Launcelot, as it once befell,
Pass'd the long year remote from Carduel :
Far roam'd the warrior ; captive knights he freed,
And dames he succour'd in their hour of need,
And many a lawless carle he did to die,
And evil customs quell'd with mastering remedy :
But now to swift return his steps were bent,
When, on a swelling hillock's green ascent,
At the slant entrance of a fertile vale,
He spied a weeping damsel, deadly pale ;

Her locks, dishevell'd all, she rent away,
 And curs'd with piteous accent Morgue the fay.
 Nigh to the maid the gallant knight advanc'd,
 And pray'd, with earnest kindness, what had chanc'd :
 " Ah me ! my lord," the doleful damsel cries,
 " Ah bitter fruit of baleful jealousies !
 By these, imprudent to my endless cost,
 My friend, the bravest knight on earth, I lost.
 Strong in my bosom beat desire to try
 By sure assay my lover's constancy ;
 For this sad end I plied each female art,
 And moulded to my will his weetless heart ;
 By me entic'd, the abhorred Morgue's abode,
 Yon vale, the irremeable vale, he trod.
 There must he bide for aye ! and I remain
 All hopeless here, till death conclude my pain.
 Too well I sped his fickleness to prove !
 For, though I deem him false, I die for love."

She ended here ; and every word she spake
 To marvel wrought Sir Launcelot du Lake :
 Awhile he ween'd some strange delirious heat
 Had thrust the powers of reason from their seat ;
 And, ever and anon, with looks intent,
 He sought that fairy vale, the place of prisonment :
 A cool and cheerful vale in truth he saw,
 But nought there seem'd to thwart free nature's law :
 Throughout it ran a stream, like silver pure,
 And deck'd with trees of goodliest garniture ;
 High circling hills the peaceful plat surround,
 High circling hills with shadowy forests crown'd.
 Again he questions then the mourning maid,
 What hidden mystery this her tale convey'd ;
 And vows, if still he draw the vital air,
 Back to her arms her captive knight to bear.

" Of royal Arthur's sister, and her deeds,"
 Thus in her tale the weeping fair proceeds,
 " And of her passing might in magick spell,
 Scarce needs it now the bruted fame to tell.
 This Morgue, 'tis said, once lov'd a comely knight,
 And fed that treacherous passion to its height ;
 Him above all the world the fay prefers,
 And fondly weens his heart enthral'd like hers.
 The knight, howe'er, with specious semblance feign'd,
 By dread of magick power alone constrain'd ;

One young and boon was mistress of his soul,
As beauteous as her rival Morgue was foul.
Soon as the fay this fatal secret learn'd,
By turns her feverous bosom froze and burn'd ;
Heart-struck she was, as if about to die,
But strong revenge forbade, and rankling enmity :
Bent was her wit to dog that loyal pair ;
And, at the last, in yonder vale so fair
She spied them both unguarded, as they prov'd
With many a fond caress how well they lov'd.
Forth from her covert then the fairy burst,
And dealt at large her calunnies accurs'd ;
And, when her venom'd railing all was spent,
She thus pronounc'd their grievous punishment :
' Here both be stay'd !—so long as life shall last
By power of mighty magick rooted fast !'
So spake the fay ; and now these lovers, each
Some paces parted from the other's reach :
Of motion void, denied the power to tell
Their hearts' sore anguish ; here for aye they dwell.
Nor this was all ;—she thence devis'd a plan
To wreak her sex's wrongs on faithless man ;
Around the vale, by incantations dread,
A huge transparent wall of air she spread ;
More firm than steel the liquid barrier's bound
Girds in on every side the fatal ground ;
No wight soe'er, whom conscious guilt shall read
Disloyal to his dame in will or deed,
May pass this precinct, journeying to the vale,
But there must find his everlasting jail.
A jail, in sooth ; yet otherwise, I wis,
No worse a grievance than confinement is ;
(The fay devising rather to impeach
All future fault, than punish former breach ;)
For there, it seems, the pensive prisoners find
Whate'er may recreate or recure the mind ;
Unshackled intercourse, delicious bowers,
And dance and sports to fill the fleeting hours :
Nay, should some virtuous loyal fair
With a false lover chance to enter there,
To such the aerial walls no barrier prove,
At will the guiltless maid may soothe or shun her love.
Yet, maugre all, to be for aye confin'd
So quells with languishment man's subject mind,

That few are found of hardihood to bide ;
 The most have quickly pin'd away and died.
 And now eighteen long years have pass'd away
 Since first this scheme of wrath inspir'd the fay ;
 And travellers have nam'd the dreadful bourn
 THE VALE OF LOVERS FALSE, THE VALE WITHOUT RETURN.
 Still as the sun renews his bright career
 He sees some spouse or lover wandering here,
 And all this time, so faithless man is found,
 Not one, they say, has backward trac'd the ground."

—" That shall they now, or e'er the day expire !"
 Exclaim'd abrupt the warrior, fill'd with fire,
 " With this good arm "——" Ah Sir !" replied the fair,
 If life, if liberty be dear, forbear !
 Vain is all prowess in this strange assay,
 Here loyalty alone will win thy way."
 " That too is mine," rejoin'd the impatient knight,
 " Though far beneath my sovereign lady's right ;
 Yet, when the knight is resolute to try,
 And fears not dole, nor death's extremity,
 What nobler gifts, what mightier virtues, need
 To warrant just success upon his deed ?"

" There needs," return'd the damsel once again,
 Faith to his mistress ; faith without a stain :
 Such faith, as, treasur'd in his soul's recess,
 Ne'er for a moment wish'd her influence less ;
 Such faith, as ne'er could image power to rove,
 And knows no fear, but fear to lose her love."
 " How ?" quoth the knight, " if some fond fair be graced
 With one so true, so loyal, and so chaste ?"
 " Ah ?" cried the maid, " if such a knight there be,
 This deed will win him immortality !
 Now may he burst this vale's impervious wall,
 And free from hopeless bondage many a thrall ;
 Now may he boldly on, secure from harm,
 And aye dissolve the abominable charm :
 But, wo the while ! there never yet was found
 A man in whom love's grace did so abound,
 A man who, pledg'd in youth's gay prime to one,
 Priz'd her as life, and priz'd but her alone.
 Now, trust me, Sir, and let my words seem wise ;
 Preserve your gallant soul for happier enterprise :
 No wise man yet has deem'd it honour's stain
 To shun assay like this, where might is vain.

“ For me, the solace of this world is o'er !
 To the sad vale I wend for evermore :
 There will I seek' out him I love so dear,
 Ungrateful though he be, and insincere ;
 There will I find him, there will I abide,
 And breathe my life's last accents by his side.”

“ No, damsel, no !” the gallant knight exclaim'd,
 Nor shalt thou die, nor manhood thus be sham'd ;
 Here stay thy steps ; anon I trust thou'lt find
 That loyalty yet dwells among mankind.”
 The warrior spoke ; and, confident of right,
 Spurr'd on his steed amain, and dar'd the fight.

Now had he reach'd the huge aerial bound,
 Stretch'd like a marish fog at eve around,
 When, as he onward urg'd his snorting steed,
 He saw the opacous volumes fast recede ;
 Back roll'd the parted clouds on either side,
 Nor dimm'd his course, nor entrance fair denied :
 So on he pass'd ; but gathering thick behind,
 As with the sweep of winter's mightiest wind,
 Full on his rear the forceful vapour lay,
 And with imperious blast prescrib'd his way.
 Before him skies that cheer'd, and earth that smil'd,
 E'en to a charm his wondering sense beguil'd ;
 Unnumber'd cells, in seemly rank dispos'd,
 On right and left the lessening prospect clos'd ;
 And in the midst, by cunning artists rear'd,
 A chapel meet for deeds of prayer appear'd ;
 A reverend pile ; which Morgue's regardful zeal
 For her poor bondmen's everlasting weal
 Had kindly plann'd, that ere the sun's decline
 Each day in solemn Mass the assembled band might join.

What foes the knight o'erthrew, what monsters dread
 Pil'd the green plain with miscreated dead,
 I sing not here ; nor yet what teen possess'd
 The fairy's heart, to read her rival bless'd
 With one whose fealty mock'd enchantment's charms,
 Past peer alike in loyalty and arms.
 Now proffer'd wealth she boasts ; now chang'd appears
 All suppliant, all seductive in her tears :
 He on his way still forward press'd outright,
 Nor turn'd aside for danger or delight,
 Though hideous forms opposed his onward course,
 And strove, with threatening looks, t' affright both man
 and horse,

Till, slackening fast, each spell's mysterious force
 Bent back to nature's law, and she resum'd her course :
 Then rang the air for joy ; uprolling high
 The foggy barrier fades into the sky ;
 And a huge host rush on with wild acclaim ;
 Now freed from captive bands, and hail their champion's
 name.

The damsel boon, Morgue's luckless rival long,
 And her brave loyal lover, lead the throng ;
 Hard by their side comes he whose lady's plight
 First to their aid had rous'd the conquering knight :
 How chang'd their doom ! this blissful hour at last
 Chas'd, as it seem'd, all thought, of penance past ;
 Morgue, singly sad, with looks deject and pale,
 Stay'd nigh the confines of her fatal vale.

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BUTCHER.

COME, all you brave gallants, listen awhile,
 That are " this bower " within ;
 For of Robin Hood, that archer good,
 A song I intend for to sing.

Upon a time it chanced so,
 Bold Robin in the forrest did 's py
 A jolly butcher, with a bonny fine mare,
 With his flesh to the market did hye.

" Good morrow, good fellow," said jolly Robin,
 What food hast thou, tell to me ?
 Thy trade to me tell, and where thou dost dwell,
 For I like well thy company."

The butcher he answer'd jolly Robin,
 " No matter where I dwell ;
 For a butcher I am, and to Notingham
 I am going, my flesh to sell."

“What is the price of thy flesh?” said jolly Robin,
“Come tell it soon unto me;
And the price of thy mare, be she never so dear,
For a butcher fain would I be.”

“The price of my flesh,” the butcher repli'd,
“I soon will tell unto thee;
With my bonny mare, and they are not too dear,
Four mark thou must give unto me.”

“Four mark I will give thee,” said jolly Robin,
“Four mark it shall be thy fee;
The money come count, and let me mount,
For a butcher I fain would be.”

Now Robin he is to Notingham gone,
His butchers trade to begin;
With good intent to the sheriff he went,
And there he took up his inn.

When other butchers they opened their meat,
Bold Robin he then begun;
But how for to sell he knew not well,
For a butcher he was but young.

When other butchers no meat could sell,
Robin got both gold and fee;
For he sold more meat for one peny
Than others could do for three.

But when he sold his meat so fast,
No butcher by him could thrive;
For he sold more meat for one peny
Than others could do for five.

Which made the butchers of Notingham
To study as they did stand,
Saying, “Surely he is some prodigal,
That hath sold his fathers land.”

The butchers stepped to jolly Robin,
Acquainted with him for to be;
“Come, brother,” one said, “we be all of one trade,
Come, will you go dine with me?”

“ Accurst of his heart,” said jolly Robin,
 “ That a butcher doth deny ;
 I will go with you, my brethren true,
 As fast as I can hie.”

But when to the sheriffs house they came,
 To dinner they hied apace,
 And Robin Hood he the man must be
 Before them all to say grace.

“ Pray God bless us all,” said jolly Robin,
 “ And our meat within this place ;
 A cup of sack so good will nourish our blood :
 And so I do end my grace.”

“ Come fill us more wine,” said jolly Robin,
 “ Let us be merry while we do stay ;
 For wine and good cheer, be it never so dear,
 I vow I the reckning will pay.”

“ Come, ‘ brothers, ’ be merry,” said jolly Robin,
 “ Let us drink, nor yet give ore ;
 For the shot I will pay, ere I go my way,
 If it costs me five pounds and more.”

“ This is a mad blade,” the butchers then said.
 Saies the sheriff, “ He is some prodigal,
 That some land has sold for silver and gold,
 And now he doth mean to spend all.”

“ Hast thou any horn beasts,” the sheriff repli’d,
 “ Good fellow, to sell unto me ?”
 “ Yes, that I have, good master sheriff,
 I have hundreds two or three,

“ And a hundred aker of good free land,
 If you please it to see :
 And Ile make you as good assurance of it,
 As ever my father made me.”

The sheriff he saddled his good palfrèy,
 And, with three hundred pound in gold,
 Away he went with bold Robin Hood,
 His horned beasts to behold.

Away then the sheriff and Robin did ride,
To the forrest of merry Sherwood,
Then the sheriff did say, "God save us this day,
From a man they call Robin Hood!"

But when a little farther they came,
Bold Robin he chanced to spy
A hundred head of good red deer,
Come tripping the sheriff full nigh.

"How like you my horn'd beasts, good master sheriff?
They be fat and fair for to see."

"I tell thee, good fellow, I would I were gone,
For I like not thy company."

Then Robin set his horn to his mouth,
And blew but blasts three;
Then quickly anon there came Little John,
And all his company.

"What is your will, master?" then said Little John,
"Good master, come tell unto me."

"I have brought hither the sheriff of Notingham
This day to dine with thee."

"He is welcome to me," then said Little John,
"I hope he will honestly pay;
I know he has gold, if it be but well told,
Will serve us to drink a whole day."

Then Robin took his mantle from his back,
And laid it upon the ground;
And out of the sheriff's portmantle
He told three hundred pound.

Then Robin he brought him thorow the wood,
And set him on his dapple gray;
"O have me commended to your wife at home:"
So Robin went laughing away.

KING LEIR AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS.

KING LEIR once rulèd in this land
 With princely power and peace ;
 And had all things with hearts content,
 That might his joys increase.
 Amongst those things that nature gave,
 Three daughters fair had he,
 So princely seeming beautiful,
 As fairer could not be.

So on a time it pleas'd the king
 A question thus to move,
 Which of his daughters to his grace
 Could shew the dearest love :
 " For to my age you bring content,"
 Quoth he, " then let me hear,
 Which of you three in plighted troth
 The kindest will appear."

To whom the eldest thus began ;
 " Dear father, mind," quoth she,
 " Before your face, to do you good,
 My blood shall render'd be :
 And for your sake my bleeding heart
 Shall here be cut in twain,
 Ere that I see your reverend age
 The smallest grief sustain."

" And so will I," the second said ;
 " Dear father, for your sake,
 The worst of all extremities
 I'll gently undertake :
 And serve your highness night and day
 With diligence and love ;
 That sweet content and quietness
 Discomforts may remove."

" In doing so, you glad my soul,"
 The aged king reply'd ;
 " But what sayst thou, my youngest girl,
 How is thy love ally'd?"

“ My love (quoth young Cordelia then)
Which to your grace I owe,
Shall be the duty of a child,
And that is all I'll show.”

“ And wilt thou show no more,” quoth he,
“ Than doth thy duty bind?
I well perceive thy love is small,
When as no more I find.
Henceforth I banish thee my court,
Thou art no child of mine;
Nor any part of this my realm
By favour shall be thine.

“ Thy elder sisters loves are more
Than well I can demand,
To whom I equally bestow
My kingdome and my land,
My pompal state and all my goods,
That lovingly I may
With those thy sisters be maintain'd
Until my dying day.”

Thus flattering speeches won renown,
By these two sisters here;
The third had causeless banishment,
Yet was her love more dear:
For poor Cordelia patiently
Went wandring up and down,
Unhelp'd, unpity'd, gentle maid,
Through many an English town:

Untill at last in famous France
She gentler fortunes found;
Though poor and bare, yet she was deem'd
The fairest on the ground:
Where when the king her virtues heard,
And this fair lady seen,
With full consent of all his court
He made his wife and queen.

Her father King Leir all this while
With his two daughters staid:
Forgetful of their promis'd loves,
Full soon the same decay'd;

And living in Queen Ragan's court,
The eldest of the twain,
She took from him his chiefest means,
And most of all his train.

For whereas twenty men were wont
To wait with bended knee :
She gave allowance but to ten,
And after scarce to three ;
Nay, one she thought too much for him ;
So took she all away,
In hope that in her court, good king,
He would no longer stay.

“ Am I rewarded thus,” quoth he,
“ In giving all I have
Unto my children, and to beg
For what I lately gave ?
I'll go unto my Gonorell :
My second child, I know,
Will be more kind and pitiful,
And will relieve my woe.”

Full fast he hies them to her court ;
Where when she heard his moan,
Return'd him answer, That she griev'd,
That all his means were gone :
But no way could relieve his wants ;
Yet if that he would stay
Within her kitchen, he should have
What scullions gave away.

When he had heard, with bitter tears,
He made his answer then ;
“ In what I did let me be made
Example to all men.
I will return again,” quoth he,
“ Unto my Ragan's court ;
She will not use me thus, I hope,
But in a kinder sort.”

Where when he came, she gave command
To drive him thence away ;
When he was well within her court
(She said) he would not stay.

Then back again to Gonorell
The woeful king did hie,
That in her kitchen he might have
What scullion boys set by.

But there of that he was deny'd
Which she had promis'd late :
For once refusing, he should not
Come after to her gate.
Thus twixt his daughters, for relief
He wandred up and down ;
Full glad to feed on beggars food,
That lately wore a crown.

And calling to remembrance then
His youngest daughters words,
That said the duty of a child
Was all that love affords :
But doubting to repair to her,
Whom he had banish'd so,
Grew frantick mad ; for in his mind
He bore the wounds of woe :

Which made him rend his milk-white locks,
And tresses from his head,
And all with blood bestain his cheeks,
With age and honour spread.
To hills and woods and watry founts
He made his hourly moan,
Till hills and woods and senseless things,
Did seem to sigh and groan.

Even thus possest with discontents,
He passed o're to France,
In hopes from fair Cordelia there,
To find some gentler chance.
Most virtuous dame ! for when she heard
Of this her father's grief,
As duty bound, she quickly sent
Him comfort and relief :

And by a train of noble peers,
In brave and gallant sort,
She gave in charge he should be brought
To Aganippus' court ;

Whose royal king, with noble mind
 So freely gave consent,
 To muster up his knights at arms,
 To fame and courage bent.

And so to England came with speed,
 With his Cordelia dear,
 To drive her sisters from their thrones,
 And repossesse King Leir.
 But she, true-hearted noble queen,
 Was in the battel slain ;
 While he, good king, in his old days,
 Possest his crown again.

And when he heard Cordelia's death,
 Who died indeed for love
 Of her dear father, in whose cause
 She did this battle move ;
 He swooning fell upon her breast,
 From whence he never parted :
 But on her bosom left his life,
 That was so truly hearted.

The lords and nobles when they saw
 The end of these events,
 The other sisters unto death
 They doomèd by consents ;
 And being dead, their crowns they left
 Unto the next of kin :
 Thus have you seen the fall of pride,
 And disobedient sin.

This ancient ballad on King Lear bears so exact an analogy to the argument of Shakespeare's play, that his having copied it could not be doubted, if it were certain that it was written before the tragedy. Here is found the hint of Lear's madness, which the old chronicles do not mention, as also the extravagant cruelty exercised on him by his daughters. In the death of Lear they likewise very exactly coincide.—The misfortune is, that there is nothing to assist us in ascertaining the date of the ballad but what little evidence arises from within ; this the reader must weigh, and judge for himself

It may be proper to observe, that Shakspeare was not the first of our dramatic poets who fitted the story of Leir to the stage. His first 4to edition is dated 1608 ; but three years before that, had been printed a play entitled "The true Chronicle History of Leir and his three daughters Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella as it hath been divers and sundry times lately acted, 1605, 4to."—This is a very poor and dull performance, but happily excited Shakspeare to undertake the subject, which he has given with very different incidents. It is remarkable, that neither the circumstances of Leir's madness, nor his retinue of a select number of knights, nor the affecting deaths of Cordelia and Leir, are found in that first dramatic piece ; in all which Shakspeare concurs with this ballad.

SIR ANDREWE BARTON.

Part the First.

“WHEN Flora with her fragrant flowers
 Bedeckt the earth so trim and gaye,
 And Neptune with his daintye showers,
 Came to present the monthe of Maye;”
 King Henrye rode to take the ayre,
 Over the river of Thames past hee;
 When eighty merchants of London came,
 And downe they knelt upon their knee.

“O yee are welcome, rich merchànts;
 Good saylors, welcome unto mee.”
 They vow’d by the rood, they were saylors good,
 But rich merchànts they cold not bee:
 “To France nor to Flanders dare we pass;
 Nor Bordeaux voyage dare we fare;
 A Scottish rover lyes upon the seas,
 Who robbs us of our merchant ware.”

The king lookt over his left shouldèr,
 And an angrye look then looked hee:
 “Have I never a lorde in all my realme,
 Will fetch this traytor unto mee?”
 “Yea, that dare I;” Lord Howard sayes;
 “Yea, that dare I with heart and hand;
 If it please your grace to give me leave,
 Myselfe wil be the only man.”

“Thou art but yong;” the kyng replied:
 “Yond Scott hath numbred manye a yeare.”
 “Trust me, my liege, Ile make him quail,
 Or before my prince I will never appeare.”
 “Then bowemen and gunners thou shalt have,
 And chuse them over my realme so free;
 Besides good mariners, and shipp-boyes,
 To guide the great shipp on the sea.”

The first man, that Lord Howard chose,
 Was the ablest gunner in all the realm,
 Though he was threescore yeeres and ten ;
 Good Peter Simon was his name.
 "Peter," sais hee, "I must to the sea,
 To bring home a traytor live or dead :
 Before all others I have chosen thee ;
 Of a hundred gunners to be the head."

"If you, my lord, have chosen mee
 Of a hundred gunners to be the head,
 Then hang me up on your maine-mast tree,
 If I miss my marke one shilling bread."¹
 My lord then chose a boweman rare,
 Whose active hands had gained fame ;
 In Yorkshire was this gentleman borne,
 And William Horseley was his name.

"Horseley," sayd he, "I must with speede
 Go seeke a traytor on the sea ;
 And now of a hundred bowemen brave,
 To be the head I have chosen thee."
 "If you," quoth hee, "have chosen mee
 Of a hundred bowemen to be the head ;
 On your main-màst I'll hanged bee,
 If I miss twelvescore one penny bread.

With pikes and gunnes, and bowemen bold,
 This noble Howard is gone to the sea ;
 With a valyant heart and a pleasant cheare,
 Out at Thames mouth sayled he,
 And days he scant had sayled three,
 Upon the 'voyage,' he tooke in hand,
 But there he mett with a noble shipp,
 And stoutely made itt stay and stand.

"Thou must tell me," Lord Howard said,
 "Now who thou art, and what's thy name ;
 And shewe me where thy dwelling is :
 And whither bound, and whence thou came."
 "My name is Henrye Hunt," quoth hee,
 With a heavye heart, and a carefull mind :
 "I and my shipp doe both belong
 To the Newcastle, that stands upon Tyne."

(1) An old English word for breadth.

“Hast thou not heard, nowe, Henrye Hunt,
 As thou hast sayled by daye and by night,
 Of a Scottish rover on the seas ;
 Men call him Sir Andrewe Barton, knight ?”
 Then ever he sighed, and sayd alas !
 With a grieved mind, and well away !
 “But over-well I knowe that wight,
 I was his prisoner yesterday.

“As I was sayling uppon the sea,
 A Burdeaux voyage for to fare ;
 To his hach-borde he clasped me,
 And robd me of all my merchant ware :
 And mickle debts, God wot, I owe,
 And every man will have his owne ;
 And I am nowe to London bounde,
 Of our gracious king to beg a boone.”

“That shall not need,” Lord Howard sais ;
 “Lett me but once that robber see,
 For every penny tane thee froe,
 It shall be doubled shillings three.”

“Nowe God forefend,” the merchant said,
 “That you shold seek soe far amisse !
 God keepe you out of that traitors hands !
 Full litle ye wott what a man hee is.

“Hee is brasse within, and steele without,
 With beames on his topcastle stronge ;
 And eighteen pieces of ordinance
 He carries on each side along :
 And he hath a pinnace deerlye dight,
 St. Andrewes crosse that is his guide ;
 His pinnace beareth ninescore men,
 And fifteen canons on each side.

“Were ye twentye shippes, and he but one ;
 I swear by kirke, and bower, and hall ;
 He wold overcome them everye one,
 If once his beames they doe downe fall.”¹

(1) It should seem from hence, that before our marine artillery was brought to its present perfection, some naval commanders had recourse to instruments or machines, similar in use, though perhaps unlike in construction, to the heavy Dolphins made of lead or iron used by the ancient Greeks ; which they suspended from beams or yards fastened to the mast, and which they precipitately let fall on the enemies' ships, in order to sink them, by beating holes through the bottoms of their undecked Triremes, or otherwise damaging them.

“This is cold comfort,” sais my lord,
 “To wellcome a stranger thus to the sea :
 Yet Ile bring him and his shipp to shore,
 Or to Scotland hee shall carrye mee.”

“Then a noble gunner you must have,
 And he must aim well with his ee,
 And sinke his pinnace into the sea,
 Or else he never orecome will bee :
 And if you chance his shipp to borde,
 This counsel I must give withall,
 Let no man to his topcastle goe
 To strive to let his beams downe fall.

“And seven pieces of ordinance,
 I pray your honour lend to mee,
 On each side of my shipp along,
 And I will lead you on the sea.
 A glasse Ile sett, that may be seene,
 Whether you sayle by day or night ;
 And to-morrowe, I sweare, by nine of the clocke
 You shall meet with Sir Andrewe Barton knight.”

Part the Second.

THE merchant sett my lorde a glasse
 Soe well apparent in his sight,
 And on the morrowe, by nine of the clocke,
 He shewed him Sir Andrewe Barton knight.
 His hachebord it was “gilt” with gold,
 Soe deerlye dight it dazzled the ee :
 “Nowe by my faith,” Lord Howarde sais,
 “This is a gallant sight to see.

“Take in your ancients, standards eke,
 So close that no man may them see ;
 And put me forth a white willow wand,
 As merchants use to sayle the sea.”
 But they stirred neither top, nor mast ;¹
 Stoutly they past Sir Andrewe by.
 “What English churles are yonder,” he sayd,
 “That can soe litle curtesye ?

(1) Did not salute.

“ Now by the roode, three yeares and more
 I have beene admirall over the sea ;
 And never an English nor Portingall
 Without my leave can passe this way.”
 Then called he forth his stout pinnace ;
 “ Fetch backe yond pedlars nowe to mee :
 I swear by the masse, yon English churles
 Shall all hang att my maine-mast tree.”

With that the pinnace itt shott off,
 Full well Lord Howard might it ken ;
 For itt stroke down my lord's fore-mast,
 And killed fourteen of his men.
 “ Come hither, Simon,” sayes my lord,
 “ Looke that thy word be true, thou said ;
 For at my maine-mast thou shall hang,
 If thou misse thy marke one shilling bread.”

Simon was old, but his heart itt was bold,
 His ordinance he laid right lowe ;
 He put in chaine¹ full nine yardes long,
 With other great shott lesse, and moe ;
 And he lette goe his great gunnes shott :
 Soe well he settled itt with his ee,
 The first sight that Sir Andrewe sawe,
 He sawe his pinnace sunke in the sea.

And when he sawe his pinnace sunke,
 Oh, how his heart with rage did swell !
 “ Nowe cutt my ropes, itt is time to be gon ;
 Ile fetch yond pedlars backe mysell.”
 When my Lord sawe Sir Andrewe loose,
 Within his heart hee was full faine :
 “ Nowe spread your ancyents, strike up drummes,
 Sound all your trumpetts out amaine.”

“ Fight on, my men,” Sir Andrewe sais,
 “ Weale howsoever this geere will sway ;
 Itt is my lord admirall of England,
 Is come to seeke mee on the sea.”
 Simon had a sonne, who shott right well,
 That did Sir Andrewe mickle scare ;
 In att his decke he gave a shott,
 Killed threescore of his men of warre.

(1) *I. e.* discharged chain shot.

Then Henrye Hunt with rigour hott
 Came bravely on the other side,
 Soone he drove downe his fore-mast tree,
 And killed fourscore men beside.
 "Nowe, out alas!" Sir Andrewe cryed,
 "What may a man now thinke, or say?
 Yonder merchant theefe, that pierceth mee,
 He was my prisoner yesterday."

"Come hither to me, thou Gordon good,
 That aye wast readye at my call;
 I will give thee three hundred markes,
 If thou wilt let my beames downe fall."
 Lord Howard hee then calld in haste,
 "Horseley, see thou be true in stead;
 For thou shalt at the maine-mast hang,
 If thou misse twelvescore one penny bread."

Then Gordon swarved the maine-mast tree,
 He swarved it with might and maine;
 But Horseley with a bearing¹ arrowe,
 Stroke the Gordon through the braine;
 And he fell unto the haches again,
 And sore his deadlye wounde did bleede:
 Then word went through Sir Andrewes men,
 How that the Gordon hee was dead.

"Come hither to mee, James Hambilton,
 Thou art my only sisters sonne,
 If thou wilt let my beames downe fall,
 Six hundred nobles thou hast wonne."
 With that he swarved the maine-mast tree,
 He swarved it with nimble art;
 But Horseley with a broad arròwe
 Pierced the Hambilton thorough the heart:

And downe he fell upon the deck,
 That with his blood did streame amaine:
 Then every Scott cryed, "Well-away!
 Alas a comelye youth is slaine!"
 All woe begone was Sir Andrewe then,
 With grieffe and rage his heart did swell:
 "Go fetch me forth my armour of prooffe,
 For I will to the topcastle mysell."

(1) Bearinge, sc. that carries well, &c., or perhaps bearing, or birring, *i. e.* whirring, or whirling arrow.

“ Go fetch me forth my armour of prooffe ;
 That gilded is with gold soe cleare :
 God be with my brother John of Barton !
 Against the Portingalls hee it ware ;
 And when he had on this armour of prooffe,
 He was a gallant sight to see :
 Ah ! nere didst thou meet with living wight,
 My deere brothèr, could cope with thee.”

“ Come hither, Horseley,” sayes my lord,
 “ And looke your shaft that itt goe right,
 Shoot a good shoote in time of need,
 And for it thou shalt be made a knight.”
 “ I’ll shoot my best,” quoth Horseley then,
 “ Your honour shall see, with might and maine ;
 But if I were hanged at your maine-mast,
 I have now left but arrowes twaine.”

Sir Andrewe he did swarve the tree,
 With right good will he swarved then :
 Upon his breast did Horseley hitt,
 But the arrow bounded back agen.
 Then Horseley spyed a privye place
 With a perfect eye in a secrette part ;
 Under the spole of his right arme
 He smote Sir Andrewe to the heart.

“ Fight on, my men,” Sir Andrewe sayes,
 “ A little Ime hurt, but yett not slaine ;
 I’ll but lye downe and bleede a while,
 And then I’ll rise and fight againe.”
 “ Fight on, my men,” Sir Andrewe sayes,
 “ And never flinche before the foe ;
 And stand fast by St. Andrewes crosse
 Untill you heare my whistle blowe.”

They never heard his whistle blow,—
 Which made their hearts waxe sore adread :
 Then Horseley sayd, “ Aboard, my lord,
 For well I wott Sir Andrewes dead.
 They boarded then his noble shipp,
 They boarded it with might and maine ;
 Eighteen score Scots alive they found,
 The rest were either maimed or slaine.

Lord Howard tooke a sword in hand,
 And off he smote Sir Andrewes head,
 " I must have left England many a daye,
 If thou wert alive as thou art dead."
 He caused his body to be cast
 Over the hatchbord into the sea,
 And about his middle three hundred crownes :
 " Wherever thou land this will bury thee."

Thus from the warres Lord Howard came,
 And backe he sayled ore the maine,
 With mickle joy and triumphing
 Into Thames mouth he came againe.
 Lord Howard then a letter wrote,
 And sealed it with seale and ring ;
 " Such a noble prize have I brought to your grace
 As never did subject to a king :

" Sir Andrewes shipp I bring with mee ;
 A braver shipp was never none :
 Nowe hath your grace two shippes of warr,
 Before in England was but one."
 King Henryes grace with royall cheere
 Welcomed the noble Howard home,
 " And where," said he, " is this rover stout,
 That I myselfe may give the doome?"

" The rover, he is safe, my leige,
 Full many a fadom in the sea ;
 If he were alive as he is dead,
 I must have left England many a day :
 And your grace may thank four men i' the ship
 For the victory wee have wonne,
 These are William Horseley, Henrye Hunt,
 And Peter Simon, and his sonne."

To Henrye Hunt, the king then sayd,
 " In lieu of what was from thee tane,
 A noble a day now thou shalt have,
 Sir Andrewes jewels and his chayne.
 And Horseley, thou shalt be a knight,
 And lands and livings shalt have store ;
 Howard shall be Erle Surrye hight,
 As Howards erst have beene before.

“ Nowe, Peter Simon, thou art old,
I will maintaine thee and thy sonne :
And the men shall have five hundred markes
For the good service they have done.”
Then in came the queene with ladyes fair
To see Sir Andrewe Barton knight ;
They weend that hee were brought on shore,
And thought to have seen a gallant sight.

But when they see his deadlye face,
And eyes soe hollow in his head,
“ I wold give,” quoth the king, “ a thousand markes,
This man were alive as hee is dead :
Yett for the manfull part hee playd,
Which fought soe well with heart and hand,
His men shall have twelvecence a day,
Till they come to my brother kings high land.”

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD.

SOME they will talk of bold Robin Hood,
And some of barons bold ;
But I'll tell you how he serv'd the bishop of Hereford,
When he robb'd him of his gold.

As it befel in merry Barnsdale,
All under the green-wood-tree,
The bishop of Hereford was to come by,
With all his company.

“ Come, kill me a ven'son,” said bold Robin Hood,
Come, kill me a good fat deer,
The bishop of Hereford is to dine with me to-day,
And he shall pay well for his cheer.”

“ We'll kill a fat ven'son,” said bold Robin Hood,
“ And dress it by the highway side ;
And we will watch the bishop narrowly,
Lest some other way he should ride.”

Robin Hood dress'd himself in shepherd's attire,
With six of his men alsò ;
And, when the bishop of Hereford came by,
They about the fire did go.

" O what is the matter ?" then said the bishòp,
" Or for whom do you make this a-do ?
Or why do you kill the king's ven'son,
When your company is so few ?"

" We are shephèrds," said bold Robin Hood,
" And we keep sheep all the year,
And we are disposed to be merry this day,
And to kill of the king's fat deer."

" You are brave fellows !" said the bishòp,
" And the king of your doings shall know :
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For before the king you shall go."

" O pardon, O pardon," said bold Robin Hood,
" O pardon, I thee pray !
For it becomes not your lordships coat
To take so many lives away."

" No pardon, no pardon," said the bishòp,
" No pardon I thee owe ;
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For before the king you shall go."

Then Robin set his back against a tree,
And his foot against a thorn,
And from underneath his shepherds coat
He pull'd out a bugle horn.

He put the little end to his mouth,
And a loud blast did he blow,
'Till threescore and ten of bold Robin's men
Came running all on a row :

All making obeysance to bold Robin Hood ;
'Twas a comely sight for to see.
" What is the matter, master," said Little John,
" That you blow so hastily ?"

“ O here is the bishop of Hereford,
And no pardon we shall have.”
“ Cut off his head, master,” said Little John,
“ And throw him into his grave.”

“ O pardon, O pardon,” said the bishòp,
“ O pardon I thee pray ;
For if I had known it had been you,
I’d have gone some other way.”

“ No pardon, no pardon,” said bold Robin Hood,
“ No pardon I thee owe ;
Therefore make haste, and come along with me,
For to merry Barnsdale you shall go.”

Then Robin he took the bishop by the hand,
And led him to merry Barnsdale ;
He made him to stay and sup with him that night,
And to drink wine, beer, and ale.

“ Call in a reckoning,” said the bishòp,
“ For methinks it grows wond’rous high.”
“ Lend me your purse, master,” said Little John,
“ And I’ll tell you bye and bye.”

Then Little John took the bishop’s cloak,
And spread it upon the ground,
And out of the bishop’s portmantua
He told three hundred pound.

“ Here’s money enough, master,” said Little John,
“ And a comely sight ’tis to see ;
It makes me in charity with the bishòp,
Tho’ he heartily loveth not me.”

Robin Hood took the bishop by the hand,
And he caused the music to play ;
And he made the old bishop to dance in his boots ;
And glad he could so get away.

THE WANDERING JEW.

WHEN as in faire Jerusalem
 Our Saviour Christ did live,
 And for the sins of all the worlde
 His own deare life did give ;
 The wicked Jewes with scoffes and scornes
 Did dailye him molest,
 That never till he left his life,
 Our Saviour could have rest.

When they had crown'd his head with thornes,
 And scourg'd him to disgrace,
 In scornfull sort they led him forthe
 Unto his dying place,
 Where thousand thousands in the streete
 Beheld him passe along,
 Yet not one gentle heart was there,
 That pityed this his wrong.

Both old and young reviled him,
 As in the streete he wente,
 And nought he found but churlish tauntes,
 By every ones consente :
 His owne deare crosse he bore himselfe,
 A burthen far too great,
 Which made him in the street to fainte,
 With blood and water sweat.

Being weary thus, he sought for rest,
 To ease his burthened soule,
 Upon a stone ; the which a wretch
 Did churlishly controule ;
 And sayd, " Away, thou King of Jewes,
 Thou shalt not rest thee here ;
 Pass on ; thy execution place
 Thou seest nowe draweth neare."

And thereupon he thrust him thence ;
 At which our Saviour sayd,
 "I sure will rest, but thou shalt walke,
 And have no journey stayed."
 With that this cursed shoemaker,
 For offering Christ this wrong,
 Left wife and children, house and all,
 And went from thence along.

Where after he had seene the bloude
 Of Jesus Christ thus shed,
 And to the cross his bodye nail'd,
 Awaye with speed he fled
 Without returning backe againe
 Unto his dwelling place,
 And wandred up and downe the worlde,
 A runnagate most base.

No resting could he finde at all,
 No ease, nor hearts content ;
 No house, nor home, nor biding place :
 But wandring forth he went
 From towne to towne in foreigne landes,
 With griev'd conscience still,
 Repenting for the heinous guilt
 Of his fore-passed ill.

Thus after some fewe ages past
 In wandring up and downe,
 He much again desired to see
 Jerusalems renowne ;
 But finding it all quite destroyed,
 He wandred thence with woe,
 Our Saviours wordes, which He had spoke,
 To verifie and showe.

"I'll rest," sayd Hee, "but thou shalt walke ;"—
 So doth this wandring Jew
 From place to place, but cannot rest
 For seeing countries newe ;
 Declaring still the power of Him,
 Whereas he comes or goes,
 And of all things done in the east,
 Since Christ His death, he showes.

The world he hath still compast round
 And seene those nations strange,
 That hearing of the name of Christ,
 Their idol gods doe change :
 To whom he hath told wondrous thinges
 Of time forepast, and gone,
 And to the princes of the worlde
 Declares his cause of moane :

Desiring still to be dissolv'd,
 And yield his mortal breath ;
 But, if the Lord hath thus decreed,
 He shall not yet see death.
 For neither lookes he old nor young,
 But as he did those times,
 When Christ did suffer on the crosse
 For mortall sinners crimes.

He hath past through many a foreigne place,
 Arabia, Egypt, Africa,
 Grecia, Syria, and great Thrace,
 And throughout all Hungaria,
 Where Paul and Peter preached Christ,
 Those blest apostles deare ;
 There he hath told our Saviours wordes,
 In countries far and neare.

And lately in Bohemia,
 With many a German towne ;
 And now in Flanders, as tis thought,
 He wandreth up and downe :
 Where learned men with him conferre
 Of those his lingering dayes,
 And wonder much to heare him tell
 His journeyes, and his wayes.

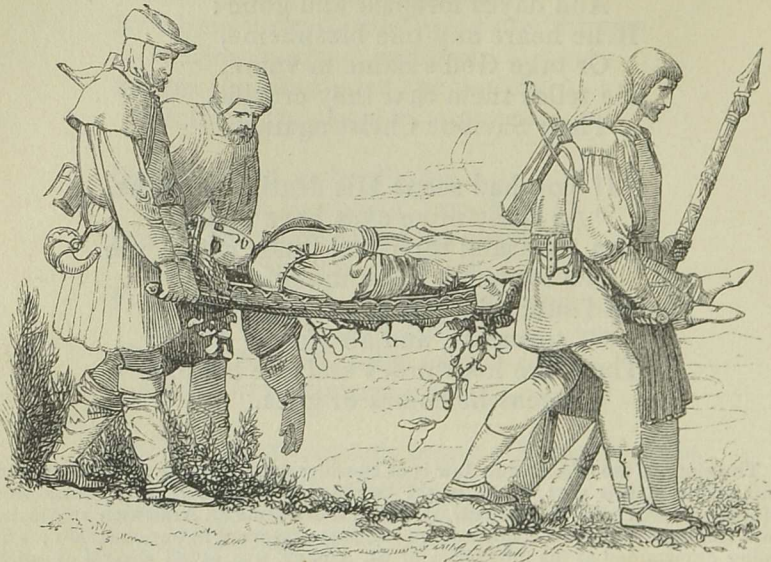
If people give this Jew an almes,
 The most that he will take
 Is not above a groat a time :
 Which he, for Jesus' sake,
 Will kindly give unto the poore,
 And thereof make no spare,
 Affirming still that Jesus Christ
 Of him hath dailye care.

He ne'er was seene to laugh nor smile,
 But weepe and make great moane ;
 Lamenting still his miseries,
 And dayes forepast and gone :
 If he heare any one blaspheme,
 Or take God's name in vaine,
 He telles them that they crucifie
 Their Saviour Christ againe.

“ If you had seene His death,” saith he,
 “ As these mine eyes have done,
 Ten thousand thousand times would yee
 His torments think upon :
 And suffer for His sake all paine
 Of torments, and all woes.”
 These are his wordes and eke his life
 Whereas he comes or goes.

The story of the Wandering Jew is of considerable antiquity : it had obtained full credit in this part of the world before the year 1228, as we learn from Matthew Paris. For in that year, it seems, there came an Armenian archbishop into England, to visit the shrines and reliques preserved in our churches ; who, being entertained at the monastery of St. Albans, was asked several questions relating to his country, &c. Among the rest, a monk, who sat near him, inquired “ if he had ever seen or heard of the famous person named Joseph, that was so much talked of ; who was present at our Lord's crucifixion, and conversed with Him, and who was still alive in confirmation of the Christian faith.” The archbishop answered, that the fact was true. And afterwards one of his train, who was well known to a servant of the abbot's, interpreting his master's words, told them in French, “ That his lord knew the person they spoke of very well : that he had dined at his table but a little while before he left the East : that he had been Pontius Pilate's porter, by name Cartaphilus ; who, when they were dragging Jesus out of the door of the Judgment-hall, struck him with his fist on the back, saying, “ Go faster, go faster, why dost thou linger ?” Upon which Jesus looked at him with a frown, and said, “ I indeed am going, but thou shalt tarry till I come.” He lives for ever, but at the end of every hundred years falls into an incurable illness, and at length into a fit or ecstasy, out of which, when he recovers, he returns to the same state of youth he was in when Jesus suffered, being then about thirty years of age. He remembers all the circumstances of the death and resurrection of Christ, the saints that arose with Him, the composing of the apostles' creed, their preaching, and dispersion ; and is himself a very grave and holy person.” This is the substance of Matthew Paris's account, who was himself a monk of St. Albans, and was living at the time when the Armenian archbishop made the above relation.

Barthram's Dirge.



THEY shot him dead at the Nine-Stone Rig,
Beside the Headless Cross,
And they left him lying in his blood,
Upon the moor and moss.

They made a bier of the broken bough,
The sauch and the aspin gray,
And they bore him to the Lady Chapel,
And waked him there all day.

A lady came to that lonely bower,
And threw her robes aside ;
She tore her ling long yellow hair,
And knelt at Barthram's side.

She bathed him in the Lady-Well,
His wounds so deep and sair ;
And she plaited a garland for his breast,
And a garland for his hair.

They rowed him in a lily-sheet,
 And bare him to his earth ;
 And the Gray Friars sung the dead man's mass,
 As they pass'd the Chapel Garth.

They buried him at the mirk midnight,
 When the dew fell cold and still,
 When the aspin gray forgot to play,
 And the mist clung to the hill.

They dug his grave but a bare foot deep,
 By the edge of the Nine-Stone Burn,
 And they cover'd him o'er with the heather-flower,
 The moss and the lady fern.

A Gray Friar staid upon the grave,
 And sang till the morning tide ;
 And a friar shall sing for Barthram's soul,
 While the Headless Cross shall bide.

The above fragmentary Ballad (from Scott's *Minstrelsy*) was taken down from the recitation of an old woman, in the north of England. The name of Barthram, or Bartram, would argue a Northumbrian origin; and there is, or was, a Headless Cross, among many so named, at Elsdon, in Northumberland. But the mention of the Nine-Stane Burn, and Nine-Stane Rig, seems to refer to those places in the vicinity of Hermitage Castle, which is countenanced by the mention of our Ladye Chapel. They certainly did bury in former days near the Nine-Stane Burn; for the Editor remembers finding a small monumental cross, with initials, lying among the heather. It was so small that, with the assistance of another gentleman, he easily placed it upright. In the return made by the Commissioners on the Dissolution of Newminster Abbey, there is an item for a chantry priest to sing daily "Ad crucem lapideam."

KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT OF CANTERBURY.

AN ancient story Ile tell you anon
 Of a notable prince, that was called King John ;
 And he rulèd England with maine and with might,
 For he did great wrong, and maintein'd little right.

And Ile tell you a story, a story so merrie,
 Concerning the Abbot of Canterbùrye ;
 How for his house-keeping, and high renowne,
 They rode poste for him to fair London towne.

An hundred men the king did heare say,
The abbot kept in his house every day ;
And fifty golde chaynes, without any doubt,
In velvet coates waited the abbot about.

“ How now, father abbot, I heare it of thee,
Thou keepest a farre better house than mee,
And for thy house-keeping and high renoune,
I feare thou work'st treason against my crown.”

“ My liege,” quo' the abbot, “ I would it were knowne,
I spend not a piece, but what is my owne ;
And I trust, your grace will doe me no deere,
For spending of my owne true-gotten geere.”

“ Yes, yes, father abbot, thy fault it is highe,
And now for the same thou needest must dye ;
For except thou canst answer me questions three,
Thy head shall be smitten from thy bodie.”

“ And first,” quo' the king, “ when I'm in this stead,
With my crowne of golde so faire on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birthe,
Thou must tell me to one penny what I am worthe.

“ Secondlye, tell me, without any doubt,
How soone I may ride the whole world about.
And at the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do think.”

“ O, these are hard questions for my shallow witt,
Nor I cannot answer your grace as yet :
But if you will give me but three weekes space,
Ile do my endeavour to answer your grace.”

“ Now three weeks space to thee will I give,
And that is the longest time thou hast to live ;
For if thou dost not answer my questions three,
Thy lands and thy livings are forfeit to mee.”

Away rode the abbot all sad at that word,
And he rode to Cambridge, and Oxenford ;
But never a doctor there was so wise,
That could with his learning an answer devise.

Then home rode the abbot of comfort so cold,
And he mett his shepheard a going to fold :
“ How now, my lord abbot, you are welcome home ;
What newes do you bring us from our King John ? ”

“ Sad newes, sad newes, shepheard, I must give ;
That I have but three weeks more to live ;
For if I do not answer him questions three,
My head will be smitten from my bodie.

“ The first is to tell him there in that stead,
With his crowne of golde so fair on his head,
Among all his liege-men so noble of birth,
To within one penny of what he is worth.

“ The seconde, to tell him, without any doubt,
How soone he may ride this whole world about :
And at the third question I must not shrinke,
But tell him there truly what he does thinke.”

“ Now cheare up, sire abbot, did you never hear yet,
That a fool he may learne a wise man witt ?
Lend me horse, and serving men, and your apparel,
And I'll ride to London to answer your quarrel.

“ Nay frowne not, if it hath been told unto mee,
I am like your lordship, as ever may bee :
And if you will but lend me your gowne,
There is none shall knowe us in fair London towne.”

“ Now horses, and serving-men thou shalt have,
With sumptuous array most gallant and brave ;
With crozier, and miter, and rochet, and cope,
Fit to appeare 'fore our father the pope.”

“ Now welcome, sire abbot,” the king he did say,
“ 'Tis well thou'rt come back to keepe thy day ;
For and if thou canst answer my questions three,
Thy life and thy living both saved shall bee.

“ And first, when thou seest me here in this stead,
With my crown of golde so fair on my head,
Among all my liege-men so noble of birthe,
Tell me to one penny what I am worth?”

“ For thirty pence our Saviour was sold
Among the false Jewes, as I have bin told :
And twenty-nine is the worth of thee,
For at least, thou art one penny worse than Hee.”

The king he laughed, and vowed by St. Bittel,¹
He did not think he had been worth so littel !
—“ Now secondly tell me, without any doubt,
How soone I may ride this whole world about ?”

“ You must rise with the sun, and ride with the same,
Until the next morning he riseth againe ;
And then your grace need not to make any doubt,
But in twenty-four hours you’ll ride it about.”

The king he laughed, and vowed by St. Jone,
“ I did not think, it could be gone so soone !”
—“ Now from the third question thou must not shrink,
But tell me here truly what I do thinke.”

“ Yea, that shall I do, and make your grace merry :
You thinke I’m the abbot of Canterbùry ;
But I’m his poor shepheard, as plain you may see,
That am come to beg pardon for him and for mee.”

The king he laughed, and vowed by the masse,
“ Ile make thee lord abbot this day in his place !”
“ Now naye, my liege, be not in such speede,
For alacke I can neither write, ne reade.”

“ Four nobles a week, then will I give to thee,
For this merry jest thou hast showne unto mee ;
And tell the old abbot when thou comest home,
Thou hast brought him a pardon from merry King John.”

(1) Meaning, probably, St. Botolph.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

TRUE Thomas lay on Huntlie bank ;
 A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e ;
 And there he saw a ladye bright,
 Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
 Her mantle o' the velvet fyne ;
 At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
 Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pulled aff his cap,
 And louted low down to his knee,—
 "All hail, thou mighty queen of heaven ;
 For thy peer on earth I never did see."

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said ;
 "That name doth not belang to me ;
 I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
 That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said ;
 "Harp and carp along with me ;
 And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
 Sure of your body I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
 That weird shall never danton me."¹
 Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
 All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said ;
 "True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me ;
 And ye maun serve me seven years,
 Through weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed ;
 She's ta'en true Thomas up behind ;
 And aye, whene'er her bridal rung,
 The steed flew swifter than the wind.

(1) That destiny shall never frighten me.

O they rade on, and farther on ;
 The steed gaed swifter than the wind ;
 Until they reached a desart wide,
 And living land was left behind.

“ Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
 And lean your head upon my knee :
 Abide, and rest a little space,
 And I will shew you ferlies three.

“ O see ye not yon narrow road,
 So thick beset with thorns and briers ?—
 That is the path of righteousness,
 Though after it but few enquires.

“ And see ye not that braid, braid road,
 That lies across that lily leven ?—
 That is the path of wickedness,
 Though some call it the road to heaven.

“ And see ye not that bonny road,
 That winds about the fernie brae ?—
 That is the road to fair Elfland,¹
 Where thou and I this night maun gae.

“ But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
 Whatever ye may hear or see ;
 For if you speak word in Elffyn land,
 Ye’ll ne’er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
 And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
 And they saw neither sun nor moon,
 But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
 And they waded through red blude to the knee ;
 For a’ the blude that’s shed on earth,
 Rins through the springs o’ that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
 And she pu’d an apple frae a tree ;
 “ Take this for thy wages, true Thomas ;
 It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.”

(1) Alluding to the popular notion respecting elves and fairies, that they are properly neither good nor evil spirits, but of a middle character.

“ My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said ;
 “ A gudely gift ye wad gie to me !
 I neither dought to buy nor sell,
 At fair or tryst, where I may be.

“ I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
 Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”—
 “ Now hold thy peace !” the ladye said,
 “ For as I say, so must it be.”—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
 And a pair of shoes of velvet green ;
 And, till seven years were gane and past,
 True Thomas on earth was never seen.

Part the Second.

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
 The sun blinked fair on pool and stream ;
 And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
 Like one awakened from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
 He saw the flash of armour flee,
 And he beheld a gallant knight,
 Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong ;
 Of giant make he 'peared to be :
 He stirred his horse as he were wode,
 Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—“ Well met, well met, true Thomas !
 Some uncouth ferlies show to me.”—
 Says—“ Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave,
 Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me !

“ Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave,
 And I will show thee curses three,
 Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
 And change the green to the black livery.

“ A storm shall roar this very hour,
 From Rosse’s hills to Solway sea.”—
 “ Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar!
 For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea.”

He put his hand on the Earlie’s head;
 He shewed him a rock, beside the sea,
 Where a king lay stiff, beneath his steed,¹
 And steel-dight nobles wiped their e’e.

“ The neist curse lights on Branxton Hills:
 By Flodden’s high and heathery side,
 Shall wave a banner red as blude,
 And chieftains throng wi’ meikle pride.

“ A Scottish king shall come full keen;
 The ruddy lion beareth he:
 A feathered arrow sharp, I ween,
 Shall make him wink and warre to see.

“ When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
 Thus to his men he still shall say—
 ‘ For God’s sake, turn ye back again,
 And give yon southern folk a fray!
 Why should I lose, the right is mine?
 My doom is not to die this day.’²

“ Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
 And woe and wonder ye sall see;
 How forty thousand spearmen stand,
 Where yon rank river meets the sea.

“ There shall the lion lose the gylte,
 And the libbards bear it clean away;
 At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
 Much gentil blude that day.”

“ Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
 Some blessing shew thou now to me,
 Or, by the faith o’ my bodie,” Corspatrick said,
 “ Ye shall rue the day ye e’er saw me!”

(1) King Alexander; killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

(2) The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland, concerning the fate of James IV., is well known.

“ The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that’s call’d of bread ;¹
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

“ Beside that brigg, out-ower that burn
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

“ Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree ;
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon blood sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be.”

“ But tell me now,” said brave Dunbar,
“ True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea ? ”

“ A French queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea ;
He of the Bruce’s blude shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

“ The waters worship shall his race ;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea ;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.”

Part the Third.

WHEN seven years more had come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show’d high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

(1) One of Thomas’s rhymes, preserved by tradition, runs thus :—

“ The burn of breid
Shall run fow reid.”

Bannock-burn is the brook here meant. The Scots give the name of *bannock* to a thick round cake of unleavened bread.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
 Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
 And crested helms, and spears a rowe,
 Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
 Resounds the ensenzie ;
 They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
 To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
 In Learmont's high and ancient hall ;
 And there were knights of great renown,
 And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
 The music, nor the tale,
 Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
 Nor mantling quaighs of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
 When as the feast was done ;
 (In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
 The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
 And harpers for envy pale ;
 And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
 And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
 The prophet pour'd along ;
 No after bard might e'er avail
 Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
 Float down the tide of years,
 As, buoyant on the stormy main,
 A parted wrëck appears.

He sung King Arthur's table round :
 The warrior of the lake ;
 How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
 And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd, in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue,
She bore the leech's part;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brengwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand ;
 With agony his heart is wrung :
 O where is Isolde's lily hand,
 And where her soothing tongue ?

She comes, she comes ! like flash of flame
 Can lover's footsteps fly :
 She comes, she comes !—she only came
 To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die : her latest sigh
 Join'd in a kiss his parting breath :
 The gentlest pair that Britain bare,
 United are in death.

There paused the harp ; its lingering sound
 Died slowly on the ear ;
 The silent guests still bent around,
 For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak,
 Nor ladies heav'd alone the sigh ;
 But half-ashamed, the rugged cheek
 Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
 The mists of evening close ;
 In camp, in castle, or in bower,
 Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
 Dream'd o'er the woeful tale ;
 When footsteps light, across the bent,
 The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes :—" What, Richard, ho !
 Arise, my page, arise !
 What venturous wight, at dead of night,
 Dare step where Douglas lies !"

Then forth they rush'd : by Leader's tide,
 A selcouth sight they see—
 A hart and hind pace side by side,
 As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow ;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run ;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red ;
Never a word he spake but three ;—
“ My sand is run ; my thread is spun ;
This sign regardeth me.”

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung ;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went ; yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall ;
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moon-beams fall.

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray :
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

“ Farewell, my father's ancient tower !
A long farewell,” said he :
“ The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

“ To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong ;
And on thy hospitable hearth
The hare shall leave her young.

“ Adieu ! Adieu !” again he cried,
All as he turned him roun'—
“ Farewell to Leader's silver tide !—
Farewell to Ercildoune !”

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
 As lingering yet he stood ;
 And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
 With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
 And spurred him the Leader o'er ;
 But though he rode with lightning speed,
 He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
 Their wondrous course had been ;
 But ne'er in haunts of living men
 Again was Thomas seen.

Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymer*. Uniting, or supposed to unite, in his person, the powers of poetical composition, and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is regarded with veneration by his countrymen. To give anything like a certain history of this remarkable man, would be a difficult task ; but the curious may derive some satisfaction from the particulars here brought together.

It is agreed, on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birth-place, of this ancient bard, was Ercildoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's Castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learmont; and that the appellation of *The Rhymer* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon this subject. In a charter, the son of our poet designs himself, "Thomas of Ercildoun, son and heir of Thomas Rymour of Ercildoun," which seems to imply, that the father did not bear the hereditary name of Learmont; or, at least, was better known and distinguished by the epithet which he had acquired by his personal accomplishments. I must, however, remark, that, down to a very late period, the practice of distinguishing the parties, even in formal writings, by the epithets which had been bestowed on them from personal circumstances, instead of the proper surnames of their families, was common, and indeed necessary, among the border clans. So early as the end of the thirteenth century, when surnames were hardly introduced in Scotland, this custom must have been universal. There is, therefore, nothing inconsistent in supposing our poet's name to have been actually Learmont, although, in this charter, he is distinguished by the popular appellation of *The Rhymer*. We are better able to ascertain the period, at which Thomas of Ercildoune lived; being the latter end of the thirteenth century.

It cannot be doubted, that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the belief of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. If we may believe Mackenzie, Learmont only versified the prophecies delivered by Eliza, an inspired nun, of a convent at Haddington. But of this there seems not to be the most distant proof. On the contrary, all ancient authors, who quote the Rhymer's prophecies, uniformly suppose them to have been emitted by himself.

Whatever doubts, however, the learned might have as to the source of the Rhymer's prophetic skill, the vulgar had no hesitation to ascribe the whole to the intercourse between the bard and the Queen of Faëry. The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge, which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends, in the tower of Ercildoun, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still "drees his weird" in Fairy Land, and is expected one day to revisit earth. In the mean while, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn, (Goblin Brook,) from the Rhymer's supernatural visitants. The veneration paid to his dwelling-place even attached itself in some degree to a person, who within the memory of man, chose to set up his residence in the ruins of Learmont's tower. The name of this man was Murray, a kind of herbalist; who, by dint of some knowledge in simples, the possession of a musical clock, an electrical machine, and a stuffed alligator, added to a supposed communication with Thomas the Rhymer, lived for many years in very good credit as a wizard.

The ballad is given from a copy obtained from a lady, residing not far from Ercildoun, corrected and enlarged by another MS. To this old tale the author has added a Second Part, consisting of a kind of Cento, from the printed prophecies ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind, to the Land of Faëry. — *Sir W. Scott.*

THE OUTLANDISH KNIGHT.

An outlandish Knight from the north lands came,
 And he came a wooing to me;
 He told me he'd take me unto the north lands,
 And I should his fair bride be.

A broad, broad shield, did this strange Knight wield,
 Whereon did the red cross shine;
 Yet never, I ween, had that strange Knight been
 In the fields of Palestine.

And out and spake this strange Knight,
 This Knight of the north countrie;
 "O maiden fair with the raven hair,
 Thou shalt at my bidding be.

“Thy sire he is from home, ladye,
For he hath a journey gone;
And his shaggy blood-hound is sleeping sound
Beside the postern stone.”

She mounted her on her milk-white steed,
And he on a dapple grey,
And they forward did ride till they reach'd the sea-side,
Three hours before it was day.

Then out and spake this strange Knight,
This Knight of the north countrie;
“O maiden fair with the raven hair,
Do thou at my bidding be.

“Alight thee, maid, from thy milk-white steed,
And deliver it unto me;
Six maids have I drown'd where the billows sound,
And the seventh one thou shalt be.

“But first pull off thy kirtle fine,
And deliver it unto me;
Thy kirtle of green is too rich, I ween,
To rot in the salt, salt sea.

“Pull off, pull off thy silken shoon,
And deliver them unto me;
Methinks that they are too fine and gay
To rot in the salt, salt sea.

“Pull off, pull off thy bonny green plaid,
That floats in the breeze so free;
It is woven fine with the silver twine,
And comely it is to see”—

—“If I must pull off my bonny green plaid,
O turn thy back to me,
And gaze on the sun, which has just begun
To peer o'er the salt, salt sea.

He turned his back on the damoselle,
And gaz'd on the bright sunbeam—
She grasp'd him tight, with her arms so white,
And plunged him into the stream.

“ Lie there, Sir Knight, thou false-hearted wight,
Lie there instead of me :
Six damsels fair thou hast drowned there,
But the seventh has drowned thee.”

That ocean wave was the false one's grave,
For he sunk right hastily ;
Though with dying voice faint, he prayed to his saint,
And uttered an Ave Marie.

She mounted her on her dapple grey steed,
And led the steed milk-white :
She rode till she reached her father's hall,
Three hours before the night.

The parrot hung in the lattice so high,
To the lady then did say,—
“ Some ruffian, I fear, has led thee from home,
For thou hast been long away.”—

—“ O do not prattle, my pretty bird,
O do not tell tales of me ;
And thy cage shall be made of the glittering gold,
Instead of the green wood tree.”

The earl, as he sat in his turret high,
On hearing the parrot did say,
“ What ails thee, what ails thee, my pretty bird,
Thou hast prattled the live-long day ? ”—

—“ Well may I prattle,” the parrot replied,
“ And call, brave earl, on thee ;
For the cat has well nigh reach'd the lattice so high,
And her eyes are fix'd on me.”—

—“ Well turn'd, well turn'd, my pretty bird,
Well turn'd, well-turn'd for me ;
Thy cage shall be made of the glittering gold,
And the door of the ivory.”

The Chatsworth Outlaw.



THE sun had risen above the mist,
The boughs in dew were dreeping ;
Seven foresters sat on Chatsworth bank,
And sung while roes were leaping.

“ Alas ! ” sung one, “ for Chatsworth oaks,
Their heads are bald and hoary,
They droop in fulness of honour and fame,
They have had their time of glory.

“ How fair they stand amid their green land,
The sock or share ne'er pain'd them ;
Not a bough or leaf have been shred from their strength,
Nor the woodman's axe profaned them.”

“ Green,” sung another, “ were they that hour
When Scotland's loveliest woman,¹
And saddest queen, in the sweet twilight,
Aneath their boughs was roamin'.

(1) Mary Queen of Scots.

“And ever the Derwent lilies her tears
In their silver tops were catching,
As she look'd to the cold and faithless north,
Till her eyes wax'd dim with watching.”

“Be mute now,” the third forester said,
“The dame who fledged mine arrow
With the cygnet's wing, has a whiter hand
Than the fairest maid on Yarrow.”

Loud laugh'd the forester fourth, and sung,
“Say not thy maid's the fair one ;
On the banks of Dove there dwells my love,
A beauteous and a rare one.”

“Now cease your singing,” the fifth one said,
“And choose of shafts the longest,
And seek the bucks on Chatsworth chase,
Where the lady-bracken's strongest.

“Let every bow be strung, and smite
The fattest and the fairest ;
Lord Devonshire will taste our cheer,
Of England's lords the rarest.”

“String them with speed,” the sixth man said,
“For low down in the forest
There runs a deer I long to smite,
With bitter shafts the sorest.

“The bucks bound blythe on Chatsworth lea,
Where brackens grow the greenest ;
The pheasant's safe 'neath Chatsworth oaks,
When the tempest sweeps the keenest.

“In the wild wood of fair Dove dwells
An Outlaw, young and handsome ;
A sight of him on Chatsworth bank
Were worth a prince's ransom.

“Now bend your bows, and choose your shafts,”—
His string at his touch went sighing ;
“The Outlaw comes—now, now at his breast
Let seven broad shafts be flying.”

The Outlaw came—with a song he came—
 Green was his gallant cleeding ;
 A horn at his belt, in his hand the bow
 That set the roebucks bleeding.

The Outlaw came—with a song he came—
 O'er a brow more brent and bonny
 The pheasant plume ne'er danced and shone,
 In a summer morning sunny.

The Outlaw came—at his belt, a blade
 Broad, short, and sharp was gleamin' ;
 Free was his step as one who had ruled
 Among knights and lovely women.

See, by his shadow in the stream
 He loves to look and linger,
 And wave his mantle richly flower'd
 By a white and witching finger.

“ Now, shall I hit him where yon gay plume
 Of the Chatsworth pheasant's glancing ;
 Or shall I smite his shapely limbs
 That charm our maidens dancing ? ”

“ Hold ! hold ! ” a northern forester said,
 “ 'Twill be told from Trent to Yarrow,
 How the true-love song of a gentle Outlaw
 Was stay'd by a churl's arrow. ”

“ It ne'er shall be said, ” quoth the forester then,
 “ That the song of a red-deer reaver
 Could charm the bow that my grandsire bent
 On the banks of Guadalquiver. ”

And a shaft he laid, as he spoke, to the string,
 When the Outlaw's song came falling
 As sweet on his ear, as the wind when it comes
 Through the fragrant woodlands calling.

There each man stood, with his good bow bent,
 And his shaft pluck'd from the quiver :
 While thus then sung that gallant Outlaw,
 Till rung both rock and river :

“ Oh! bonny Chatsworth, and fair Chatsworth,
Thy bucks go merrily bounding;
Aneath your green oaks, as the herds flew past,
How oft have my shafts been sounding!

“ It is sweet to meet with the one we love,
When the night is nigh the hoarest;
It is sweet to bend the bow as she bids,
On the proud prey of the forest.

“ One fair dame loves the cittern’s sound,
When the words of love are winging;
But my fair one’s music’s the Outlaw’s horn,
And his bow-string sharply singing.

“ She waves her hand—her lily-white hand,
’Tis a spell to each who sees her;
One glance of her eye—and I snatch my bow,
And let fly my arrows to please her.

“ I bring the lark from the morning cloud,
When its song is at the sweetest;
I stay the deer upon Chatsworth lea,
When its flight is at the fleetest.

“ There’s magic in the wave of her hand,
And her dark eye rains those glances,
Which fill the best and the wisest hearts
With love’s sweet influences.

“ Her locks are brown—bright berry brown,
O’er her temples white descending;
And her neck is like the neck of the swan,
As her stately way she’s wending.

“ How I have won my way to her heart
’Tis past all men’s discernin’;
For she is lofty, and I am low,
My lovely Julia Vernon.”

He turned him right and round about,
With a step both long and lordly;
When he was aware of those foresters bold,
And he bore him wondrous proudly.

“ Good morrow, good fellows ! ” all fearless he said,
“ Was your supper spread so sparely ;
Or is it to feast some sweet young dame,
That you bend your bows so early ? ”

“ I feast me now on the ptarmigan,
And then I taste the pheasant ;
And my supper is of the Chatsworth fawn,
Which my love dresses pleasant.

“ But to-morrow I feast on yon bonny roebuck ;
’Tis time I stay’d his bounding ; ”
He twang’d his string—like the swallow it sung,
All shrilly and sharply sounding.

“ By my grandsire’s bow,” said a forester then,
“ By my shafts which fly so yarely,
And by all the skill of my strong right hand,
Good Outlaw, thou lords it rarely.

“ Seest thou yon tree, yon lonely tree,
Whose bough the Derwent’s laving ?—
Upon its top, thou gallant Outlaw,
Thou’lt be hung to feed the raven.

“ So short as the time this sharp shaft flies,
And strikes yon golden pheasant—
There—thy time is meted, so bid farewell
To these greenwoods wild and pleasant.”

The Outlaw laugh’d ; “ Good fellow,” he said,
“ My sword’s too sure a servant
To suffer that tree to bear such fruit,
While it stands upon the Derwent.

“ She would scorn my might, my own true love,
And the mother would weep that bore me,
If I stay’d my step for such strength as thine,
Or seven such churls before me.

“ I have made my way with this little brown sword,
Where the war-steeds rush’d the throngest ;
I have saved my breast with this little brown sword,
When the strife was at the strongest.

“ It guarded me well in bonny Scotland,
When the Scotts and Graemes fought fervent ;
And the steel that saved me by gentle Nith,
May do the same by Derwent.”

“ Fair fall thee, Outlaw, for that word !
Oh ! Nith, thou gentle river,
When a bairn, I flew along thy banks,
As an arrow from the quiver.

“ The roebucks run upon thy braes
Without a watch or warden ;
And the tongue that calls thee a gentle stream
Is dear to Geordie Gordon.”

The Outlaw smiled, “ ’Tis a soldier’s saye
That the Gordons, blythe and ready,
Ne’er stoop’d the plumes of their basnets bright
Save to a lovesome lady.”

“ Now by Saint Allen, the forester said,
And the Saint who slew the dragon ;
And by this hand that wields the brand,
As wight as it tooms the flagon ;

“ It shall never be told of the Gordon’s name,
Of a name so high and lordly,
That I took a gallant Outlaw in the toil,
And hanged him base and cowardly.

“ I’ll give thee the law of Lord Nithisdale,
A good lord of the border ;
So take thy bow, thou gallant Outlaw,
And set thy shafts in order.

“ And we will go each one to his stance,
With bows and arrows ready ;
And thou shalt climb up Chatsworth bank,
Where the wood is wild and shady.

“ And thou shalt stand on yon rough red rock,
With woodbine hung and bracken ;
And shout three times o’er Derwent vale,
Till all the echoes waken.

“Then loose thy shafts, and slay a buck,
Fit for a monarch’s larders ;
And carry him free from Chatsworth park,
In spite of seven warders.

“Do this and live, and I do vow
By the white hand of my mother,
I’ll smite him low who runs ere thou shout,
Were he Saint Andrew’s brother.”

The Outlaw smiled ; “Good Gordon,” he said,
“I’ll shout both high and gaily ;
And smite a buck, and carry him off ;
’Tis the work I’m bowne to daily.”

The Outlaw stood upon Chatsworth rock,
Like light his looks did gladden ;
The sun was shining on Bakewell-Edge,
And on the heights of Haddon.

The Outlaw stood upon Chatsworth rock,
He look’d to vale and mountain,
And gave a shout so shrill, the swans
Sprung up from stream and fountain.

The Outlaw stood upon Chatsworth rock,
And shouted shrill and gaily ;
Till the dun deer leap’d from brake and bower,
Two miles down Derwent valley.

The Outlaw stood upon Chatsworth rock,
Looking o’er the vale so narrow ;
And his voice flew fleet as away from the string
Starts off the thirsty arrow.

And loudly it rung in Haddon-wood,
Where the deer in pairs were dernan :
And loudly it rung in Haddon-hall,
And up rose Julia Vernon.

“If ever I heard my true love’s voice,
’Tis now through my bowers ringing ;
His voice is sweet as the wild bird’s note,
When the buds bloom to its singing.

“For well I know my true love’s voice,
It sounds so gay and clearly :
An angel’s voice in a maiden’s ear
Would ne’er drop down so dearly.”

She took her green robe in a hand
White as the opening lily,
And the morning sun and the lovely maid
Look’d down on Chatsworth valley.

Around the brow of the high green hill
The sun’s fair beams were twining,
And bend and fall of the Derwent stream
In golden light were shining.

The silver smoke from Chatsworth tower
Like a pennon broad went streaming,
And gush’d against the morning sky,
And all the vale was gleaming.

She gave one look on the broad green land,
And back her tresses sheddin’,
With her snowy neck, and her bonnie blue eyes,
Came down from the hill of Haddon.

She saw the wild dove start from its bower,
And heard the green boughs crashing ;
And saw the wild deer leap from its lair,
And heard the deep stream dashing.

And then she saw her own true love
Bound past by bush and hollow ;
And after him seven armed men
With many a shout and hollo.

“Oh ! had I but my bow, my love,
And seven good arrows by me,
I’d make the fiercest of thy foes
Bleed ere they could come nigh thee.

“Oh ! had I but thy sword, my love,
Thy sword so brown and ready,
I’d meet thy foes on Chatsworth bank,
Among the woodlands shady.”

On high she held her white, white hands,
 In wild and deep devotion,
 And locks and lips, and lith and limb,
 Were shivering with emotion.

“Nay, stay the chase,” said a forester then,
 “For when the lion’s roaring
 The hound may hide:—May the raven catch
 The eagle in his soaring?”

“Farewell, my bow, that could send a shaft,
 As the levin leaves the thunder!
 A lady looks down from Haddon height
 Has snapt thy strength asunder.

“A lady looks down from Haddon height,
 O’er all men’s hearts she’s lordin’;
 Who harms a hair of her true love’s head
 Makes a foe of Geordie Gordon.”

The bank was steep,—down the Outlaw sprung,
 The greenwood wide resounded;
 The wall was high,—like a hunted hart
 O’er it he fleetly bounded.

And when he saw his love, he sunk
 His dark glance in obeisance:
 “Comes my love forth to charm the morn,
 And bless it with her presence?”

“How sweet is Haddon hill to me,
 Where silver streams are twining!
 My love excels the morning star,
 And shines while the sun is shining.

“She and the sun, and all that’s sweet,
 Smile when the grass is hoarest;
 And here at her white feet I lay
 The proud buck of the forest.

“Now farewell, Chatsworth’s woodlands green,
 Where fallow-deer are dernan;
 For dearer than the world to me
 Is my love, Julia Vernon!”

A Ballad.

FROM THE WHAT-D'YE-CALL-IT.



'Twas when the seas were roaring, with hollow blasts of wind,
A damsel lay deploring, all on a rock reclined.
Wide o'er the foaming billows, she cast a wistful look ;
Her head was crown'd with willows, that trembled o'er the brook.

“Twelve months are gone and over,
And nine long tedious days :
Why didst thou, venturous lover,
Why didst thou trust the seas ?
Cease, cease, thou cruel ocean,
And let my lover rest :
Ah ! what’s thy troubled motion
To that within my breast ?

“The merchant, robb’d of pleasure,
Sees tempests in despair ;
But what’s the loss of treasure
To losing of my dear ?
Should you some coast be laid on
Where gold and diamonds grow,
You’d find a richer maiden,
But none that loves you so.

“How can they say that nature
Has nothing made in vain ;
Why then beneath the water
Should hideous rocks remain ?
No eyes the rocks discover
That lurk beneath the deep,
To wreck the wandering lover,
And leave the maid to weep.”

All melancholy lying,
Thus wail’d she for her dear ;
Repay’d each blast with sighing,
Each billow with a tear ;
When o’er the white wave stooping,
His floating corpse she spied ;
Then, like a lily drooping,
She bow’d her head and died.

THE HERMIT OF WARKWORTH.

Fit the First.

DARK was the night, and wild the storm,
And loud the torrent's roar ;
And loud the sea was heard to dash
Against the distant shore.

Musing on man's weak hapless state,
The lonely hermit lay ;
When, lo ! he heard a female voice
Lament in sore dismay.

With hospitable haste he rose,
And wak'd his sleeping fire ;
And snatching up a lighted brand,
Forth hied the rev'rend sire.

All sad beneath a neighbouring tree
A beauteous maid he found,
Who beat her breast, and with her tears
Bedew'd the mossy ground.

“ O weep not, lady, weep not so ;
Nor let vain fears alarm ;
My little cell shall shelter thee,
And keep thee safe from harm.”

“ It is not for myself I weep,
Nor for myself I fear ;
But for my dear and only friend,
Who lately left me here :

“ And while some sheltering bower he sought
Within this lonely wood,
Ah ! sore I fear his wandering feet
Have slipt in yonder flood.”

“ O ! trust in Heaven,” the Hermit said,
“ And to my cell repair ;
Doubt not but I shall find thy friend,
And ease thee of thy care.”

Then climbing up his rocky stairs,
He scales the cliff so high ;
And calls aloud, and waves his light
To guide the stranger's eye.

Among the thickets long he winds,
With careful steps and slow :
At length a voice return'd his call,
Quick answering from below :

“ O tell me, father, tell me true,
If you have chanc'd to see
A gentle maid, I lately left
Beneath some neighbouring tree :

“ But either I have lost the place,
Or she hath gone astray :
And much I fear this fatal stream
Hath snatch'd her hence away.”

“ Praise Heaven, my son,” the Hermit said :
“ The lady's safe and well :
And soon he join'd the wandering youth,
And brought him to his cell.

Then well was seen, these gentle friends,
They lov'd each other dear :
The youth he press'd her to his heart ;
The maid let fall a tear.

Ah ! seldom had their host, I ween,
Beheld so sweet a pair :
The youth was tall, with manly bloom ;
She, slender, soft, and fair.

The youth was clad in forest green,
With bugle-horn so bright :
She in a silken robe and scarf,
Snatch'd up in hasty flight.

“ Sit down, my children,” says the sage,
“ Sweet rest your limbs require :”
Then heaps fresh fuel on the hearth,
And mends his little fire.

“Partake,” he said, “my simple store,
Dried fruits, and milk, and curds;”
And spreading all upon the board,
Invites with kindly words.

“Thanks, father, for thy bounteous fare,”
The youthful couple say:
Then freely ate, and made good cheer,
And talk’d their cares away.

“Now say, my children, (for perchance
My counsel may avail),
What strange adventure brought you here
Within this lonely dale?”

“First tell me, father,” said the youth,
“ (Nor blame mine eager tongue,)
What town is near? What lands are these?
And to what lord belong?”

“Alas! my son,” the Hermit said,
“Why do I live to say,
The rightful lord of these domains
Is banish’d far away?”

“Ten winters now have shed their snows
On this my lowly hall,
Since valiant Hotspur (so the North
Our youthful lord did call)

“Against Fourth Henry Bolingbroke
Led up his northern powers,
And, stoutly fighting, lost his life
Near proud Salopia’s towers.

“One son he left, a lovely boy,
His country’s hope and heir;
And, oh! to save him from his foes
It was his grandsire’s care.

“In Scotland safe he plac’d the child
Beyond the reach of strife,
Nor long before the brave old Earl
At Braham lost his life.

“ And now the Percy name, so long
 Our northern pride and boast,
 Lies hid alas! beneath a cloud;
 Their honours reft and lost.

“ No chieftain of that noble house
 Now leads our youth to arms;
 The bordering Scots despoil our fields,
 And ravage all our farms.

“ Their halls and castles, once so fair,
 Now moulder in decay;
 Proud strangers now usurp their lands,
 And bear their wealth away.

“ Nor far from hence, where yon full stream
 Runs winding down the lea,
 Fair Warkworth lifts her lofty towers,
 And overlooks the sea.

“ Those towers, alas! now lie forlorn,
 With noisome weeds o’erspread,
 Where feasted lords and courtly dames,
 And where the poor were fed.

“ Meantime far off, ’mid Scottish hills,
 The Percy lives unknown:
 On strangers’ bounty he depends,
 And may not claim his own.

“ O might I with these aged eyes
 But live to see him here,
 Then should my soul depart in bliss!”—
 He said, and dropt a tear.

“ And is the Percy still so lov’d
 Of all his friends and thee?
 Then, bless me, father,” said the youth,
 “ For I, thy guest, am he.”

Silent he gaz’d, then turn’d aside
 To wipe the tears he shed;
 And lifting up his hands and eyes,
 Pour’d blessings on his head:

“ Welcome, our dear and much lov'd lord,
Thy country's hope and care :
But who may this young lady be,
That is so wondrous fair ?”

“ Now, father ! listen to my tale,
And thou shalt know the truth :
And let thy sage advice direct
My experienc'd youth.

“ In Scotland I've been nobly bred
Beneath the Regent's ¹ hand,
In feats of arms, and every lore
To fit me for command.

“ With fond impatience long I burn'd
My native land to see :
At length I won my guardian friend
To yield that boon to me.

“ Then up and down in hunter's garb
I wander'd as in chase,
Till in the noble Neville's ² house
I gain'd a hunter's place.

“ Some time with him I liv'd unknown,
Till I'd the hap so rare
To please this young and gentle dame,
That Baron's daughter fair.”

“ Now, Percy,” said the blushing maid,
“ The truth I must reveal ;
Souls great and generous, like to thine,
Their noble deeds conceal.

“ It happen'd on a summer's day,
Led by the fragrant breeze,
I wander'd forth to take the air
Among the green-wood trees.

(1) Robert Stuart, Duke of Albany.

(2) Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmoreland, who chiefly resided at his two castles of Brancepeth, and Raby, both in the Bishopric of Durham.

“ Sudden a band of rugged Scots,
That near in ambush lay,
Moss-troopers from the border-side,
There seiz'd me for their prey.

“ My shrieks had all been spent in vain ;
But Heaven, that saw my grief,
Brought this brave youth within my call,
Who flew to my relief.

“ With nothing but his hunting spear,
And dagger in his hand,
He sprung like lightning on my foes,
And caus'd them soon to stand.

“ He fought till more assistance came :
The Scots were overthrown ;
Thus freed me, captive, from their bands,
To make me more his own.”

“ O happy day !” the youth replied :
“ Blest were the wounds I bear !
From that fond hour she deign'd to smile,
And listen to my prayer.

“ And when she knew my name and birth,
She vow'd to be my bride ;
But oh ! we fear'd (alas, the while !)
Her princely mother's pride :

“ Sister of haughty Bolingbroke,¹
Our house's ancient foe,
To me, I thought, a banish'd wight,
Could ne'er such favour shew.

“ Despairing then to gain consent,
At length to fly with me
I won this lovely timorous maid ;
To Scotland bound are we.

(1) Joan, Countess of Westmoreland, mother of the young lady, was daughter of John of Gaunt, and half-sister of King Henry IV.

“This evening, as the night drew on,
Fearing we were pursued,
We turn'd adown the right-hand path,
And gain'd this lonely wood :

“Then lighting from our weary steeds
To shun the pelting shower,
We met thy kind conducting hand,
And reach'd this friendly bower.”

“Now rest you both,” the Hermit said ;
“Awhile your cares forego :
Nor, Lady, scorn my humble bed :
—We'll pass the night below.”¹

Fit the Second,

LOVELY smil'd the blushing morn,
And every storm was fled :
But lovelier far, with sweeter smile,
Fair Eleanor left her bed.

She found her Henry all alone,
And cheer'd him with her sight ;
The youth consulting with his friend
Had watch'd the livelong night.

What sweet surprise o'erpower'd her breast !
Her cheek what blushes dyed,
When fondly he besought her there
To yield to be his bride !—

“Within this lonely hermitage
There is a chapel meet :
Then grant, dear maid, my fond request,
And make my bliss complete.”

(1) Adjoining to the cliff which contains the Chapel of the Hermitage, are the remains of a small building, in which the Hermit dwelt. This consisted of one lower apartment, with a little bedchamber over it, and is now in ruins ; whereas the Chapel, cut in the solid rock, is still very entire and perfect.

“ O Henry, when thou deign’st to sue,
 Can I thy suit withstand?
 When thou, lov’d youth, hast won my heart,
 Can I refuse my hand?

“ For thee I left a father’s smiles,
 And mother’s tender care;
 And whether weal or woe betide,
 Thy lot I mean to share.”

“ And wilt thou then, O generous maid!
 Such matchless favour show,
 To share with me, a banish’d wight,
 My peril, pain, or woe?

“ Now Heaven, I trust, hath joys in store
 To crown thy constant breast:
 For know, fond hope assures my heart
 That we shall soon be blest.

“ Not far from hence stands Coquet Isle¹
 Surrounded by the sea;
 There dwells a holy friar, well known
 To all thy friends and thee;

“ ’Tis Father Bernard, so rever’d
 For every worthy deed;
 To Raby Castle he shall go,
 And for us kindly plead.

“ To fetch this good and holy man
 Our reverend host is gone;
 And soon, I trust, his pious hands
 Will join us both in one.”

Thus they in sweet and tender talk
 The lingering hours beguile:
 At length they see the hoary sage
 Come from the neighbouring isle.

(1) In the little island of Coquet, near Warkworth, are still seen the ruins of a cell, which belonged to the Benedictine monks of Tinemouth-Abbey.

With pious joy and wonder mix'd
He greets the noble pair,
And glad consents to join their hands
With many a fervent prayer.

Then strait to Raby's distant walls
He kindly wends his way :
Meantime in love and dalliance sweet
They spend the livelong day.

And now, attended by their host,
The Hermitage they view'd,
Deep-hewn within a craggy cliff,
And overhung with wood.

And near a flight of shapely steps,
All cut with nicest skill,
And piercing through a stony arch,
Ran winding up the hill :

There deck'd with many a flower and herb
His little garden stands ;
With fruitful trees in shady rows,
All planted by his hands.

Then, scoop'd within the solid rock,
Three sacred vaults he shows .
The chief, a chapel, neatly arch'd,
On branching columns rose.

Each proper ornament was there,
That should a chapel grace ;
The lattice for confession fram'd,
And holy-water vase.

O'er either door a sacred text
Invites to godly fear ;
And in a little scutcheon hung
The cross, and crown, and spear.

Up to the altar's ample breadth
Two easy steps ascend ;
And near, a glimmering solemn light
Two well-wrought windows lend.

Beside the altar rose a tomb
 All in the living stone;
 On which a young and beauteous maid
 In goodly sculpture shone.

A kneeling angel, fairly carv'd,
 Lean'd hovering o'er her breast;
 A weeping warrior at her feet;
 And near to these her crest.¹

The clift, the vault, but chief the tomb,
 Attract the wondering pair:
 Eager they ask, "What hapless dame
 Lies sculptur'd here so fair?"

The Hermit sigh'd, the Hermit wept,
 For sorrow scarce could speak:
 At length he wip'd the trickling tears
 That all bedew'd his cheek.

"Alas! my children, human life
 Is but a vale of woe;
 And very mournful is the tale
 Which ye so fain would know!"

THE HERMIT'S TALE.

YOUNG lord, thy grandsire had a friend
 In days of youthful fame;
 Yon distant hills were his domains,
 Sir Bertram was his name.

Where'er the noble Percy fought,
 His friend was at his side;
 And many a skirmish with the Scots
 Their early valour tried.

(1) This is a Bull's Head, the crest of the Widdrington family. All the figures, &c. here described are still visible, only somewhat effaced with length of time.

Young Bertram lov'd a beauteous maid,
As fair as fair might be ;
The dew-drop on the lily's cheek
Was not so fair as she.

Fair Widdrington the maiden's name,
Yon towers her dwelling-place ;¹
Her sire an old Northumbrian chief,
Devoted to thy race.

Many a lord, and many a knight,
To this fair damsel came ;
But Bertram was her only choice ;
For him she felt a flame.

Lord Percy pleaded for his friend,
Her father soon consents ;
None but the beauteous maid herself
His wishes now prevents.

But she, with studied fond delays,
Defers the blissful hour ;
And loves to try his constancy,
And prove her maiden power.

“ That heart,” she said, “ is lightly priz'd,
Which is too lightly won ;
And long shall rue that easy maid
Who yields her love too soon.”

Lord Percy made a solemn feast
In Alnwick's princely hall ;
And there came lords, and there came knights,
His chiefs and barons all.

With wassail, mirth, and revelry,
The castle rang around :
Lord Percy call'd for song and harp,
And pipes of martial sound.

The minstrels of thy noble house,
All clad in robes of blue,
With silver crescents on their arms,
Attend in order due.

(1) Widdrington Castle is about five miles south of Warkworth.

And high heroic acts they tell,
 Their perils past recall :
 When, lo ! a damsel young and fair
 Stepp'd forward through the hall.

She Bertram courteously address'd ;
 And, kneeling on her knee,—
 “ Sir knight, the lady of thy love
 Hath sent this gift to thee.”

Then forth she drew a glittering helm,
 Well plaited many a fold ;
 The casque was wrought of temper'd steel,
 The crest of burnish'd gold.

“ Sir knight, thy lady sends thee this,
 And yields to be thy bride,
 When thou hast prov'd this maiden gift
 Where sharpest blows are tried.”

Young Bertram took the shining helm,
 And thrice he kiss'd the same :
 “ Trust me, I'll prove this precious casque
 With deeds of noblest fame.”

Lord Percy, and his barons bold,
 Then fix upon a day
 To scour the marches, late opprest,
 And Scottish wrongs repay.

The knights assembled on the hills
 A thousand horse or more :
 Brave Widdrington, though sunk in years,
 The Percy standard bore.

Tweed's limpid current soon they pass,
 And range the borders round :
 Down the green slopes of Tiviotdale
 Their bugle-horns resound.

As when a lion in his den
 Hath heard the hunters' cries,
 And rushes forth to meet his foes ;
 So did the Douglas rise.

Attendant on their chief's command
A thousand warriors wait :
And now the fatal hour drew on
Of cruel keen debate.

A chosen troop of Scottish youths
Advance before the rest ;
Lord Percy mark'd their gallant mien,
And thus his friend address'd :

“ Now, Bertram, prove thy lady's helm,
Attack yon forward band ;
Dead or alive I'll rescue thee,
Or perish by their hand.”

Young Bertram bow'd, with glad assent,
And spurr'd his eager steed,
And calling on his lady's name,
Rush'd forth with whirlwind speed.

As when a grove of sapling oaks
The livid lightning rends ;
So fiercely 'mid the opposing ranks
Sir Bertram's sword descends.

This way and that he drives the steel,
And keenly pierces through ;
And many a tall and comely knight
With furious force he slew.

Now closing fast on every side,
They hem Sir Bertram round :
But dauntless he repels their rage,
And deals forth many a wound.

The vigour of his single arm
Had well nigh won the field ;
When ponderous fell a Scottish axe,
And clave his lifted shield.

Another blow his temples took,
And reft his helm in twain ;
That beauteous helm, his lady's gift !
—— His blood bedew'd the plain.

Lord Percy saw his champion fall
 Amid th' unequal fight;
 "And now, my noble friends," he said,
 "Let's save this gallant knight."

Then rushing in, with stretch'd-out shield
 He o'er the warrior hung,
 As some fierce eagle spreads her wing
 To guard her callow young.

Three times they strove to seize their prey,
 Three times they quick retire:
 What force could stand his furious strokes,
 Or meet his martial fire?

Now gathering round on every part
 The battle rag'd amain;
 And many a lady wept her lord,
 That hour untimely slain.

Percy and Douglas, great in arms,
 There all their courage show'd;
 And all the field was strew'd with dead,
 And all with crimson flow'd.

At length the glory of the day
 The Scots reluctant yield,
 And, after wondrous valour shown,
 They slowly quit the field.

All pale, extended on their shields,
 And weltering in his gore.
 Lord Percy's knights their bleeding friend
 To Wark's fair castle bore.¹

"Well hast thou earn'd my daughter's love,"
 Her father kindly said;
 "And she herself shall dress thy wounds,
 And tend thee in thy bed."

(1) Wark Castle, a fortress belonging to the English, and of great note in ancient times, stood on the southern banks of the river Tweed, a little to the east of Tiviotdale, and not far from Kelso. It is now entirely destroyed.

A message went; no daughter came,
Fair Isabel ne'er appears;
"Beshrew me," said the aged chief,
"Young maidens have their fears."

"Cheer up, my son, thou shalt her see,
So soon as thou canst ride;
And she shall nurse thee in her bower,
And she shall be thy bride."

Sir Bertram at her name reviv'd,
He bless'd the soothing sound;
Fond hope supplied the nurse's care,
And heal'd his ghastly wound.

Fit the Third.

ONE early morn, while dewy drops
Hung trembling on the tree,
Sir Bertram from his sick-bed rose;
His bride he would go see.

A brother he had in prime of youth,
Of courage firm and keen;
And he would 'tend him on the way,
Because his wounds were green.

All day o'er moss and moor they rode,
By many a lonely tower;
And 'twas the dew-fall of the night
Ere they drew near her bower.

Most drear and dark the castle seem'd
That wont to shine so bright;
And long and loud Sir Bertram call'd
Ere he beheld a light.

At length her aged nurse arose,
With voice so shrill and clear,—
"What wight is this, that calls so loud,
And knocks so boldly here?"

“ ’Tis Bertram calls, thy lady’s love,
 Come from his bed of care :
 All day I’ve ridden o’er moor and moss
 To see thy lady fair.”

“ Now out, alas ! ” she loudly shriek’d ;
 “ Alas ! how may this be ?
 For six long days are gone and past
 Since she set out to thee.”

Sad terror seized Sir Bertram’s heart,
 And ready was he to fall ;
 When now the drawbridge was let down,
 And gates were opened all.

“ Six days, young knight, are past and gone,
 Since she set out to thee ;
 And sure, if no sad harm had happ’d,
 Long since thou wouldst her see.

“ For when she heard thy grievous chance,
 She tore her hair, and cried,
 ‘ Alas ! I’ve slain the comeliest knight,
 All through my folly and pride !

“ And now to atone for my sad fault,
 And his dear health regain,
 I’ll go myself, and nurse my love,
 And soothe his bed of pain.’

“ Then mounted she her milk-white steed
 One morn at break of day ;
 And two tall yeomen went with her,
 To guard her on the way.”

Sad terror smote Sir Bertram’s heart,
 And grief o’erwhelm’d his mind :
 “ Trust me,” said he, “ I ne’er will rest
 Till I thy lady find.”

That night he spent in sorrow and car
 And with sad-boding heart
 Or ever the dawning of the day
 His brother and he depart.

“Now, brother, we'll our ways divide,
O'er Scottish hills to range;
Do thou go north, and I'll go west;
And all our dress we'll change.

“Some Scottish carle bath seiz'd my love,
And borne her to his den;
And ne'er will I tread English ground
Till she's restor'd again.”

The brothers straight their paths divide,
O'er Scottish hills to range;
And hide themselves in quaint disguise,
And oft their dress they change.

Sir Bertram, clad in gown of grey,
Most like a palmer poor,
To halls and castles wanders round,
And begs from door to door.

Sometimes a minstrel's garb he wears,
With pipe so sweet and shrill;
And wends to every tower and town,
O'er every dale and hill.

One day as he sat under a thorn,
All sunk in deep despair,
An aged pilgrim pass'd him by,
Who mark'd his face of care.

“All minstrels yet that e'er I saw
Are full of game and glee;
But thou art sad and woe-begone!
I marvel whence it be!”

“Father, I serve an aged lord,
Whose grief afflicts my mind;
His only child is stolen away,
And fain I would her find.”

“Cheer up, my son; perchance,” he said,
“Some tidings I may bear:
For oft when human hopes have fail'd,
Then heavenly comfort's near.

“ Behind yon hills so steep and high,
Down in a lowly glen,
There stands a castle fair and strong,
Far from the abode of men.

“ As late I chanc'd to crave an alms,
About this evening hour,
Methought I heard a lady's voice
Lamenting in the tower.

“ And when I ask'd what harm had happ'd,
What lady sick there lay?
They rudely drove me from the gate,
And bade me wend away.”

These tidings caught Sir Bertram's ear,
He thank'd him for his tale;
And soon he hasted o'er the hills,
And soon he reach'd the vale.

Then drawing near those lonely towers,
Which stood in dale so low,
And sitting down beside the gate,
His pipes he 'gan to blow.

“ Sir Porter, is thy lord at home,
To hear a minstrel's song;
Or may I crave a lodging here,
Without offence or wrong?”

“ My lord,” he said, “ is not at home,
To hear a minstrel's song;
And, should I lend thee lodging here,
My life would not be long.”

He play'd again so soft a strain,
Such power sweet sounds impart,
He won the churlish porter's ear,
And mov'd his stubborn heart.

“ Minstrel,” he said, “ thou play'st so sweet,
Fair entrance thou should'st win,
But, alas! I'm sworn upon the rood
To let no stranger in.

“ Yet, minstrel, in yon rising cliff
Thou’lt find a sheltering cave;
And here thou shalt my supper share,
And there thy lodging have.”

All day he sits beside the gate,
And pipes both loud and clear:
All night he watches round the walls,
In hopes his love to hear.

The first night, as he silent watch’d
All at the midnight hour,
He plainly heard his lady’s voice
Lamenting in the tower.

The second night, the moon shone clear,
And gilt the spangled dew;
He saw his lady through the grate,
But ’twas a transient view.

The third night, wearied out, he slept
Till near the morning tide;
When, starting up, he seiz’d his sword,
And to the castle hied.

When, lo! he saw a ladder of ropes
Depending from the wall;
And o’er the moat was newly laid
A poplar strong and tall.

And soon he saw his love descend,
Wrapt in a tartan plaid,
Assisted by a sturdy youth,
In Highland garb y-clad.

Amaz’d, confounded at the sight,
He lay unseen and still;
And soon he saw them cross the stream,
And mount the neighbouring hill.

Unheard, unknown of all within,
The youthful couple fly;
But what can ’scape the lover’s ken,
Or shun his piercing eye?

With silent step he follows close
 Behind the flying pair,
 And saw her hang upon his arm
 With fond familiar air.

“Thanks, gentle youth,” she often said;
 “My thanks thou well hast won:
 For me what wiles hast thou contriv’d!
 For me what dangers run!

“And ever shall my grateful heart
 Thy services repay:”—
 Sir Bertram would no further hear,
 But cried, “Vile traitor, stay!

“Vile traitor! yield that lady up!”
 And quick his sword he drew;
 The stranger turn’d in sudden rage,
 And at Sir Bertram flew.

With mortal hate their vigorous arms
 Gave many a vengeful blow;
 But Bertram’s stronger hand prevail’d,
 And laid the stranger low.

“Die, traitor, die!”—A deadly thrust
 Attends each furious word.
 Ah! then fair Isabel knew his voice,
 And rush’d beneath his sword.

“O stop,” she cried, “O stop thy arm!
 Thou dost thy brother slay!”—
 And here the hermit paus’d, and wept—
 His tongue no more could say.

At length he cried, “Ye lovely pair,
 How shall I tell the rest?
 Ere I could stop my piercing sword,
 It fell, and stabb’d her breast!”

“Wert thou thyself that hapless youth?
 Ah! cruel fate!” they said.
 The Hermit wept, and so did they:
 They sigh’d; he hung his head.

“ O blind and jealous rage,” he cried,
“ What evils from thee flow !”
The Hermit paus’d ; they silent mourn’d :
He wept, and they were woe.

Ah ! when I heard my brother’s name,
And saw my lady bleed,
I rav’d, I wept, I curst my arm
That wrought the fatal deed.

In vain I clasp’d her to my breast,
And clos’d the ghastly wound ;
In vain I press’d his bleeding corpse,
And rais’d it from the ground.

My brother, alas ! spake never more,
His precious life was flown :
She kindly strove to soothe my pain,
Regardless of her own.

“ Bertram,” she said, “ be comforted,
And live to think on me :
May we in heaven that union prove,
Which here was not to be !

“ Bertram,” she said, “ I still was true :
Thou only hadst my heart :
May we hereafter meet in bliss !
We now, alas ! must part.

“ For thee I left my father’s hall,
And flew to thy relief,
When, lo ! near Cheviot’s fatal hills
I met a Scottish chief,

“ Lord Malcolm’s son, whose proffer’d love
I had refus’d with scorn ;
He slew my guards, and seiz’d on me
Upon that fatal morn ;

“ And in these dreary hated walls
He kept me close confin’d ;
And fondly sued, and warmly press’d,
To win me to his mind.

“ Each rising morn increas'd my pain,
Each night increas'd my fear !
When, wandering in this northern garb,
Thy brother found me here.

“ He quickly form'd the brave design
To set me, captive, free ;
And on the moor his horses wait,
Tied to a neighbouring tree.

“ Then haste, my love, escape away,
And for thyself provide ;
And sometimes fondly think on her
Who should have been thy bride.”

Thus, pouring comfort on my soul,
Even with her latest breath,
She gave one parting, fond embrace,
And clos'd her eyes in death.

And soon those honour'd dear remains
To England were convey'd ;
And there within their silent tombs,
With holy rites, were laid.

For me, I loath'd my wretched life,
And long to end it thought ;
Till time, and books, and holy men,
Had better counsels taught.

They rais'd my heart to that pure source
Whence heavenly comfort flows :
They taught me to despise the world,
And calmly bear its woes.

No more the slave of human pride,
Vain hope, and sordid care,
I meekly vow'd to spend my life
In penitence and prayer.

The bold Sir Bertram, now no more
Impetuous, haughty, wild ;
But poor and humble Benedict,
Now lowly, patient, mild.

My lands I gave to feed the poor,
And sacred altars raise ;
And here, a lonely anchorite,
I come to end my days.

This sweet sequester'd vale I chose,
These rocks, and hanging grove ;
For oft beside that murmuring stream
My love was wont to rove.

My noble friend approv'd my choice ;
This blest retreat he gave :
And here I carv'd her beauteous form,
And scoop'd this holy cave.

Full fifty winters, all forlorn,
My life I've linger'd here ;
And daily o'er this sculptur'd saint
I drop the pensive tear.

And thou, dear brother of my heart
So faithful and so true,
The sad remembrance of thy fate
Still makes my bosom rue !

Yet not unpitied pass'd my life,
Forsaken or forgot,
The Percy and his noble sons
Would grace my lowly cot ;

Oft the great Earl, from toils of state
And cumbrous pomp of power,
Would gladly seek my little cell,
To spend the tranquil hour.

But length of life is length of woe !
I liv'd to mourn his fall :
I liv'd to mourn his godlike sons
And friends and followers all.

But thou the honours of thy race,
Lov'd youth, shalt now restore ;
And raise again the Percy name
More glorious than before.

He ceas'd; and on the lovely pair
His choicest blessings laid :
While they, with thanks and pitying tears,
His mournful tale repaid.

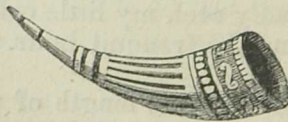
And now what present course to take
They ask the good old sire ;
And, guided by his sage advice,
To Scotland they retire.

Meantime their suit such favour found
At Raby's stately hall,
Earl Neville and his princely spouse
Now gladly pardon all.

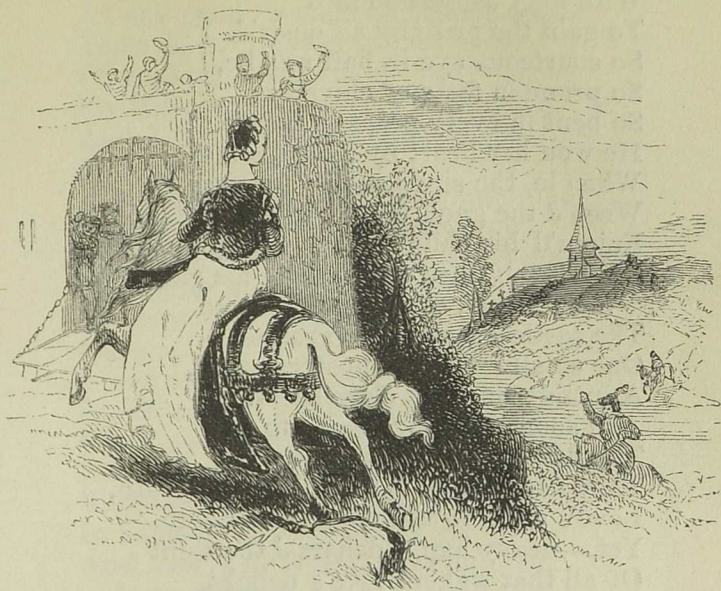
She, suppliant, at her nephew's¹ throne
The royal grace implor'd :
To all the honours of his race
The Percy was restor'd.

The youthful Earl still more and more
Admir'd his beauteous dame :
Nine noble sons to him she bore,
All worthy of their name.

(1) King Henry V. Anno 1414.



The Gray Palfrey.



In fair Champagne, in days of yore,
Full ill-endow'd with worldly store,
But bravely thew'd, of virtue bright,
Sir William dwelt, a dreadless knight,
With scarce two hundred livres' land—
His manors were his good right hand ;
Staid worth, a courage uncontroll'd,
And honour, pure as native gold.

A widow'd lord, of visage hoar,
One good long league, or little more,
Apart from good Sir William's towers,
With one fair daughter pass'd his hours ;
And there his life's declining day
Slipp'd on in undisturb'd retreat,
Beguil'd by Nina's presence sweet,
And cherish'd, once in every year,
With good ten thousand livres clear.

So dainty and so boon a maid,
With such a heritage to aid,
Ye well may judge was furnish'd still
With sighing lovers at her will.
But chief in hope beyond the rest
Sir William loyal love profess'd,

With lofty aspiration fir'd
 To gain the prize by all desir'd.
 So courteous eye in hall was he,
 So prime in feats of chivalry ;
 So bent in every point to please,
 He won her heart by slow degrees ;
 When lo, the sire's suspicious care
 Ween'd the good knight too often there,
 Enjoin'd his child to shun him straight,
 And sternly turn'd him from his gate.

Sir William, daily pacing round
 The castle's interdicted ground,
 One small neglected postern spied,
 A jutting buttress close beside ;
 And soon, devising means to tell
 The damsel he had sped so well,
 They both renew'd, in whisper'd breath,
 Love's loyal vows that last till death.
 Yet,—heavy hap,—debarr'd the sight
 Of all that wakens love's delight,
 No look to paint their mutual bliss,
 No cordial clasp, no thrilling kiss ;
 Still trembling, lest suspicion hoar
 Should snatch them hence for evermore.
 Such state Sir William could not bear,
 But onward hies, whatever fare ;
 Fall weal or utter woe betide,
 To ask sweet Nina for his bride.

“ Fair sire ” (he thus the lord assays,
 With manly port and simple phrase),
 “ Fair sire ! I long have lov'd thy child :
 My name, my lineage undefil'd ;
 Meseems, such worship doth possess,
 As warrants thought of good success.
 To Nina's hand my hopes aspire ;
 And thus I ask her of her sire.
 Enough. Thy answer must decide,
 Or death, or Nina to my bride.”
 “ Sir knight,” (replied the gray-beard lord),
 I marvel nothing, by my word,
 To hear my dainty Nina moves
 Bold gallant knights to deadly loves :
 For young is she, and debonaire,
 And wise withal, though passing fair.

With birth as high, and free from stain,
As any maid through all Champagne.
Then (if her duty meets my hope),
Of land she'll sure have lordly scope ;
My heiress, as thou may'st perceive,
And I have mickle wealth to leave ;
A damsel of such promise brave,
If much I wander not, may have
A prince of France, of royal blood,
Nor think her spouse one jot too good.
Of gentles more than one or two,
As stout, if well I wot, as you,
Have put me to this very proof :
I ever answer—' time enough !'
I seek not yet a son-in-law :
I wait some wight sans speck or flaw :
And such perfections rarely dwell
With errant knights, who most excell
In winning prize at tilters' play,
And, like their falcons, live on prey !"

At so rude answer to his suit
Confusion struck Sir William mute ;
Swift to the forest's gloom he flies,
There dwells with bitter tears and sighs
Till darksome night came thickly on ;
Then steals the lover wo-begone,
Up to the privy postern gate,
And there he finds his loyal mate ;
And there, his heart with sorrows rent,
" Farewell !" he cries, " my steps are bent
Far, far away, to other realms ;
Here deadly agony o'erwhelms
My sinking sprite for loss of thee !
Here dwells no joy, no hope for me !
O execrable thirst of gain ;
Love's, loyal love's eternal bane."
" Alas !" return'd his weeping mate,
But now I joy'd in my estate ;
For such an offering, well I guess'd,
Made marriage ties more surely bless'd.
Now I (my gift to thee controul'd)
Most execrate troth-riving gold !
Yet let us not, sweet love ! despair,
Hear what device my thoughts prepare.

"To Medot straight your journey wend,
 Where lives my father's oldest friend :
 One well advis'd of all his ways,
 The playmate of his boyish days ;
 Your uncle, you perceive I mean,
 He loves you, William, well I ween ;
 To him, our plighted promise pure,
 How we have lov'd, and what endure,
 With undisguisèd frankness own :
 He'll pity woe himself has known ;
 And let him to my sire repair,
 To urge thy suit with hopeful prayer."

She spoke—but ere her speech was done,
 Is William to his uncle gone :
 His tale all told as most behov'd,
 Save only, how he was belov'd,
 " Well chosen, nephew, by my fay,"
 The old man cries—" this many a day
 I've known your mistress, fair and mild,
 So set your heart at rest, my child :
 I'll go, or ere this sun expire,
 Nor fear to win her of her sire."
 And on the spot, in very deed,
 Bidding his folk bring forth his steed,
 He left Sir William, nigh distraught
 With raptures of ecstatic thought !
 Awhile, with fixèd arms he stood,
 Then leap'd upon his courser good,
 And sought Galardon's listed field,
 Where two days' tournament was held ;
 And musing, onward as he pac'd,
 On all the bliss he soon should taste ;
 Felt no mistrust, nor once divin'd
 What guile and treason lurk'd behind.

The uncle now had climb'd the steep,
 The drawbridge past, and gain'd the keep ;
 Then down the two old playmates sat,
 And grac'd their meal with mickle chat ;
 Call'd up their deeds of prowess done
 With knights and damsels dead and gone ;
 And filling wine, and wine again,
 Drank down each other's healths amain.
 At last, when every page and groom,
 The tables clear'd, had left the room,

The Lord of Medot thus began :

“ Old comrade mine, life's meagre span
Crawls heavily, with little gree,
To lonely bachelors like me !
Thy daughter soon will seek a spouse ;
Thou too wilt have an empty house :
What sayst thou?—might it come to pass
That I might wed this dainty lass,
My worldly goods, that self-same hour,
I'd give her all, to be her dower ;
We'd dwell all three for life together,
Nor heed long nights, nor wintry weather.”

The sire such spousal offer charms ;
He hugs the gray-beard in his arms,
Brings forth sweet Nina to her mate,
And orders wedding garments straight ;
For father, child, and all must on,
The morrow following next but one,
To Castle Medot, (so the sire
Yields to the bridegroom his desire,)
With the first peep of morning light,
To solemnize the marriage rite.

To fill the pomp with bride-folk meet,
All round their spurring lackeys greet
Whome'er lean shanks, and wither'd faces,
Had kept thus far from death's embraces,
And bid them—many a tottering guest !
To sweet sad Nina's nuptial feast.

Since weddings first were known, I ween
So quaint a troop no eye had seen ;
Such wrinkled elders, bald and bare,
They seem'd, as all assembled there,
To hear one last, “ Heaven speed ye,” said
Ere to their long sad home they sped.

Now, while to deck the future bride,
New coverchiefs and robes are tried ;
And she, with counterfeited cheer,
Devours each bitter sigh and tear ;
More steeds, 'twas plain, must be purvey'd
To mount so large a cavalcade ;
So, forth a menial stripling fared
To borrow all that could be spared.

The lubber, as he went his way,
Bethought him sure that palfrey gray

On which Sir William went to ride,
Must needs be welcome to the bride!
Forthwith, aside he turns his beast
To gain this palfrey for the feast.

Leave we awhile the father old,
How fared the knight must now be told.

Sir William, in the tourney's fray
Had borne the choicest prize away,
And homeward bent, with hope exalted,
Though bootless on his road he halted
Before his uncle's gate awhile;
Yet were his thoughts so free from guile,
He weens, be sure, his hopes to bliss
With the first tidings of success,
His uncle to his hall will come—
So, joyful hies he to his home;
And there, to cheat a weary hour,
He bids a minstrel to his bower,
And hears sweet songs of blissful love,
And hopes, ere long, that bliss to prove.

His uncle now, be sure, is near;
And hark! a bugle strikes his ear.
Behold him—no!—a menial slave
From Nina's sire some boon to crave.
And thus the loon his suit commends:
"Fair sir! my lord kind greeting sends,
And fain would borrow, if he may,
For twice twelve hours, your palfrey gray."
"Most willingly! and braver steed
Ne'er bore a knight to valorous deed;
But who the courser shall bestride?"—
"Sweet Nina, sir, your uncle's bride.
To-morrow, ere the dawn of day,
To Medot's towers she takes her way."
"Nina?"—"Yes sure; her sire's command
To your good uncle gives her hand."

Quite wo-begone, with frantick air,
Hush'd in the silence of despair,
The cruel tale Sir William hears;
And doubts its truth, and blames his fears;
And bids repeat each word again,
And writhes with renovated pain.
Then, staring wild,—“Hence! hence away,
Quick from my sight the steed convey!

Let him the perjur'd Nina bear,
 And crown her joys with my despair ;
 To Medot bear th' exulting bride
 Array'd in all her nuptial pride !
 Yet sure, in spite of her disdain,
 When she shall seize that palfrey's rein,
 Awhile on me her heart shall rue !—
 Ah Nina !—thou !—so wonder true !
 Thou too dost weep ; thou, lost like me,
 Victim of foulest treachery ;
 Thou lov'st me still : thy ruthless sire
 Would vainly force thy free desire ;
 And, till my being I resign,
 This constant heart shall aye be thine !”

Meanwhile, throughout the spacious keep,
 The baron's guests were fast asleep.
 Prepar'd, ye wot, at early day,
 To ride three leagues of rugged way,
 Warn'd that, ere dawn, the porter's bell
 Shall rouse each sleeper from his cell ;
 Well prim'd with wine, the sapient crew
 At early hour to rest withdrew.
 Only sweet Nina sleepless lies ;
 Vain schemes in quick succession rise,
 Vain hopes of visionary aid :—
 Alas, the flattering visions fade,
 No hope of aid or flight appears,
 Her sole resource, unceasing tears.

Scarce midnight past, the moon 'gan rise,
 And struck the porter's wondering eyes
 Where he (some evening bumpers quaff'd)
 Sat dreaming of the morrow's draught ;
 So, waken'd by the moon-light blaze,
 He ween'd it sure the morning's rays :
 Sprang to his bell with hasty zeal,
 And rang amain a deafening peal.
 All quickly rise alert and prest,
 E'en Nina's self at length is dress'd.
 Stunn'd by her woes she nothing heeds
 The gallant guests, the prancing steeds,
 Till the gray palfrey meets her eyes :
 Then gush her tears, then burst her sighs :
 She may not mount ;—with eager prayer
 She begs this last worst pang to spare ;

Her prayers, her struggles, all are vain ;
 On must she fare.—The menial train
 The march begin : next pace along
 The wedding-guests, a gray-beard throng ;
 Then, in the rear, the weeping maid ;
 And last, to close the cavalcade,
 An ancient knight, of valour tried,
 The future sponsor of the bride.

Three leagues of road, ye heard me say,
 The band must pass ; through woods it lay :
 So straight, so cross'd with briar and bough,
 Two steeds abreast 'twould scant allow.
 Perforce the troop must march in file.
 With songs and jests one tedious mile,
 Joyous and brisk the veterans ride ;
 At length the songs and jests subside ;
 The still cold air, the glimmering moon,
 Tell them they left their beds too soon :
 From eye to eye the influence creeps,
 Each nods awhile, then soundly sleeps.
 Gentles ! so courteous and so sage,
 Ye know the reverence due to age ;
 Ye honour eld ; and yet, perdie,
 I gage ye would have laugh'd to see
 These slumbering gray-beards in a row,
 Their bald heads nodding to and fro,
 Now dropping on their coursers' mane,
 Now starting bolt-upright again.

The bride, with love and grief distraught,
 Wastes not on them a moment's thought ;
 But, as the wretch to death who wends,
 Deems that his march too quickly ends,
 Poor Nina blames her courser's speed ;
 Checks, and still checks her eager steed,
 Till the grave troop, to sleep resign'd,
 Leave their sweet charge full far behind.
 Still at her heels the sponsor hies,
 And opes, at times, his languid eyes,
 But close the palfrey gray appears ;
 Again he nods, nor danger fears :
 Indeed, so narrow was the way
 He weens they cannot go astray.

At length the road in two divides :
 Eager to reach his distant guides,

Straight on the sponsor's courser fares,
Straight on his weetless rider bears.
Not so Sir William's palfrey gray :
Left his own judgment to obey,
He by the right-hand path proceeds,
Which to Sir William's stable leads.

But ere they reach the knight's abode,
A crossing torrent bars the road.
In plung'd the steed. The dashing sound
Wakes Nina from her trance profound.
Oh could she scape that odious chain !
But, if that rising hope be vain,
Far better here to die she deems,
Engulf'd within these whelming streams !
The streams, howbe, though deep and wide,
Well knew the steed, who oft had tried.
Quick bounds he forth with crest elate,
Nor stops, but at Sir William's gate.

The porter sounds his bugle clear,
To speak some noble stranger near ;
"Quick ! open quick ! from felon hands
Scarce scap'd, a maid your help demands !"
The porter scans with studious eye
That form ! that robe of scarlet dye !
That steed ! so like the palfrey gray,—
'Tis, sure, some charitable fay
That makes young errant knights her care,
And comes to cure his lord's despair !
Alas ! her utmost help he needs !
So, with his news the porter speeds.

Much were the courteous knight to blame
Should he neglect the stranger dame ;
So, straight he bids the drawbridge fall,
His menials marshall'd in the hall,
Himself, as fits, with honour meet,
Goes forth the beauteous guest to greet ;
And lowly bows, and sadly rears
His feverish eyes, still sprent with tears,
And sees—his Nina's angel face,
And feels his Nina's warm embrace !
Close and more close her timid breast,
Against his sheltering bosom press'd.
Yet still, with wild reverted eyes,
"Shield me ! oh shield me, love," she cries,

The knight replied, "to guard my love,
 Think not these arms shall nerveless prove :
 No! let our foes their powers combine !
 Thou art, and ever shall be mine."
 Now calls he forth his faithful band.—
 The drawbridge rais'd, the turrets mann'd ;
 No fear, though numerous foes assail,
 Their utmost power shall soon prevail ;
 One task remains, the best and last :
 So to the chapel are they pass'd,
 And there, with Heaven's mysterious rites,
 The chaplain sage their hands unites.
 Their anguish past, their long annoy,
 More keenly points the present joy:
 The menials press on every side
 Round the good knight, and lovely bride ;
 And bless, with shouts that rend the air,
 Sir William bold, and Nina fair !

Not thus, meanwhile, in Medot's hall :
 There, the quaint guests assembled, all
 Appear'd in nuptial robes array'd,
 All, save the sponsor and the maid ;
 But, of the sleeping troop, not one
 Could dream which way this pair was gone.
 At length the sponsor knight they see ;
 Still nodding on his steed was he,
 And much surpris'd, in open day,
 No more to view the palfrey gray.
 Perchance, where tangled paths have cross'd,
 The maid is in the forest lost ?
 Not so : they search the forest round,
 Nina was nowhere to be found ;
 Till by a river's side they see,—
 O fatal sight !—the palfrey flee,
 With Nina mounted on his back,
 Swift bound upon a distant track.

They strain their coursers, one and all,
 But Nina long had gain'd the wall,
 And, safe within her lover's bower,
 Enjoyed the happy, nuptial hour,
 Ere the tired horsemen, homeward bent,
 Asham'd, their idle chase lament.
 At length they learn, in happy hour,
 Fair Nina shares Sir William's bower ;

(Thus by his squire Sir William sends,
 The knight his love to all commends,
 And greets each dame and reverend lord,
 And bids them to his humble board.
 So went they all. With decent air
 The knight to each presents the fair ;
 The fair belov'd from early life,
 And now his dear and wedded wife.

Scarce can he breathe the fatal sound
 Ere angry murmurs rise around.
 But when the knight his tale has told,
 Of Nina to his uncle sold ;
 Of two fond hearts of fraud the prey,
 Till rescu'd by the palfrey gray,
 These elders, train'd in honour's cause,
 Grown gray beneath love's powerful laws,
 All in Sir William's cause conspire,
 All press to gain th' indignant sire ;
 And, should the uncle urge his claim,
 Condemn the deed to deathless shame.
 So both, from mutual bonds releas'd,
 Unite to bliss the nuptial feast.
 Within the year the uncle died,
 And soon the father of the bride ;
 So rules the knight their joint domain,
 The wealthiest lord in all Champagne.

THE BRAES OF YARROW.

“ THY banks were bonny, Yarrow stream,
 When first on them I met my lover ;
 Thy braes how dreary, Yarrow stream,
 Where now thy waves his body cover.
 For evermore, O Yarrow stream,
 Thou art to me a stream of sorrow,
 For never on thy banks shall I
 Behold my love, the flower of Yarrow.

" He promis'd me a milk-white steed
 To bear me to his father's bowers ;
 He promis'd me a little page
 To 'squire me to his father's towers ;
 He promis'd me a wedding-ring,—
 The wedding-day was fix'd to-morrow ;
 Now he is wedded to his grave,
 Alas ! his watery grave is Yarrow.

" Sweet were our words when last we met,
 My passion I as freely told him,
 Clasp'd in his arms, I little thought
 That I should never more behold him.
 Scarce was he gone, I saw his ghost,
 It vanish'd with a shriek of sorrow ;
 Thrice did the water-wraith ascend,
 And give a doleful groan through Yarrow.¹

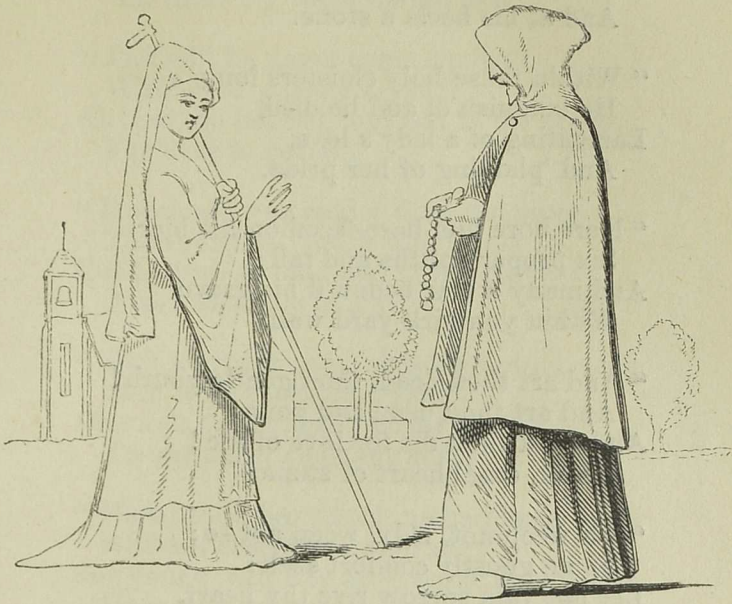
" His mother from the window look'd,
 With all the longing of a mother ;
 His little sister, weeping, walk'd
 The greenwood-path to find her brother.
 They sought him east, they sought him west,
 They sought him all the forest thorough ;
 They only saw the cloud of night,
 They only heard the roar of Yarrow.

" No longer from the window look,
 Thou hast no son, thou tender mother ;
 No longer walk the lonely wood,
 Alas ! thou hast no more a brother.
 No longer seek him east and west,
 And search no more the forest thorough,
 For, wandering in the night so dark,
 He fell a lifeless corse in Yarrow.

" The tear shall never leave my cheek,
 No other youth shall be my marrow,
 I'll seek thy body in the stream,
 And then with thee I'll sleep in Yarrow."
 The tear did never leave her cheek,
 No other youth became her marrow,
 She found his body in the stream,
 And now she sleeps with him in Yarrow.

(1) Vide Wordsworth's "Yarrow Revisited."

The Friar of Orders Gray.



It was a friar of orders gray,
Walk'd forth to tell his beads ;
And he met with a lady fair,
Clad in a pilgrim's weeds.

“ Now Heaven thee save, thou reverend friar !
I pray thee tell to me,
If ever at yon holy shrine
My true love thou didst see.”

“ And how should I know your true love
From many another one ?”

“ Oh, by his cockle hat and staff,
And by his sandal shoon.

“ But chiefly by his face and mien,
That were so fair to view ;
His flaxen locks that sweetly curl'd,
And eyne of lovely blue.”

“ O lady, he is dead and gone!
Lady, he's dead and gone!
And at his head a green grass turf,
And at his heels a stone.

“ Within these holy cloisters long
He languish'd, and he died,
Lamenting of a lady's love,
And 'plaining of her pride.

“ Here bore him bare-faced on his bier
Six proper youths and tall;
And many a tear bedew'd his grave
Within yon kirk-yard wall.”

“ And art thou dead, thou gentle youth!
And art thou dead and gone!
And didst thou die for love of me!
Break, cruel heart of stone!”

“ Oh weep not, lady, weep not so;
Some ghostly comfort seek;
Let not vain sorrow rive thy heart,
Nor tears bedew thy cheek.”

“ Oh do not, do not, holy friar,
My sorrow now reprove;
For I have lost the sweetest youth
That e'er won lady's love.

“ And now, alas! for thy sad loss,
I'll e'ermore weep and sigh;
For thee I only wish'd to live,
For thee I wish to die.”

“ Weep no more, lady, weep no more,
Thy sorrow is in vain:
For violets pluck'd, the sweetest showers
Will ne'er make grow again.

“ Our joys as winged dreams do fly;
Why, then, should sorrow last?
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,
Grieve not for what is past.”

“ Oh say not so, thou holy friar ;
I pray thee, say not so ;
For since my true love died for me,
’Tis meet my tears should flow.

“ And will he never come again ?
Will he ne’er come again ?
Ah ! no, he is dead, and laid in his grave,
For ever to remain.

“ His cheek was redder than the rose,
The comeliest youth was he :—
But he is dead, and laid in his grave,
Alas ! and woe is me !”

“ Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever :
One foot on sea, and one on land,
To one thing constant never.

“ Hadst thou been fond, he had been false,
And left thee sad and heavy :
For young men e’er were fickle found,
Since summer trees were leafy.”

“ Now say not so, thou holy friar,
I pray thee, say not so ;
My love he had the truest heart ;
Oh he was ever true !

“ And art thou dead, thou much-lov’d youth ?
And didst thou die for me ?
Then farewell home ! for evermore
A pilgrim I will be.

“ But first upon my true love’s grave
My weary limbs I’ll lay,
And thrice I’ll kiss the green grass turf
That wraps his breathless clay.”

Yet stay, fair lady, stay awhile
Beneath yon cloister wall :
See, through the hawthorn blows the cold wind,
And drizzling rain doth fall.”

“ Oh stay me not, thou holy friar,
 Oh stay me not, I pray :
 No drizzling rain that falls on me
 Can wash my fault away.”

“ Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
 And dry those pearly tears ;
 For see, beneath this gown of gray,
 Thy own true love appears.

“ Here, forced by grief and hopeless love,
 These holy weeds I sought :
 And here, amidst these lonely walls,
 To end my days I thought.

“ But haply, for my year of grace¹
 Is not yet pass'd away,
 Might I still hope to win thy love,
 No longer would I stay.”

“ Now farewell grief, and welcome joy,
 Once more unto my heart ;
 For since I've found thee, lovely youth,
 We never more will part.”

As the foregoing song (says Percy) has been thought to have suggested to Dr. Goldsmith the plan of his ballad of “ Edwin and Emma,” it is but justice to say, that his poem was written first, and that if there is any imitation in the case, they will be found both to be indebted to the beautiful old ballad “ Gentle Herdsman,” &c. printed in this work. (See p. 82.)

(1) The year of probation, or noviciate.



THE MERMAID.

ON Jura's heath how sweetly swell
 The murmurs of the mountain bee!
 How softly mourns the writhèd shell,
 Of Jura's shore, its parent sea!

But softer, floating o'er the deep,
 The mermaid's sweet sea-soothing lay,
 That charmed the dancing waves to sleep,
 Before the bark of Colonsay.

Aloft the purple pennons wave,
 As parting gay from Crinan's shore,
 From Morven's wars the seamen brave
 Their gallant chieftain homeward bore.

In youth's gay bloom, the brave Macphail
 Still blamed the lingering bark's delay;
 For her he chid the flagging sail,
 The lovely Maid of Colonsay.

And "raise," he cried, "the song of love,
 The maiden sung with tearful smile,
 When first, o'er Jura's hills to rove,
 We left afar the lonely isle!—

"When on this ring of ruby red
 Shall die," she said, "the crimson hue,
 Know that thy favourite fair is dead,
 Or proves to thee and love untrue."

Now, lightly poised, the rising oar
 Disperses wide the foamy spray,
 And, echoing far o'er Crinan's shore,
 Resounds the song of Colonsay.

"Softly blow, thou western breeze,
 Softly rustle through the sail!
 Soothe to rest the furrowy seas,
 Before my love, sweet western gale!

“ Where the wave is tinged with red,
 And the russet sea-leaves grow,
 Mariners with prudent dread,
 Shun the shelving reefs below.

“ As you pass through Jura’s sound,
 Bend your course by Scarba’s shore,
 Shun, O shun, the gulf profound,
 Where Corrivreckin’s surges roar !

“ If, from that unbottomed deep,
 With wrinkled form and wreathèd train
 O’er the verge of Scarba’s steep,
 The sea-snake heave his snowy mane,

“ Unwarp, unwind his oozy coils,
 Sea-green sisters of the main,
 And, in the gulf where ocean boils,
 The unwieldy wallowing monster chain.

“ Softly blow, thou western breeze,
 Softly rustle through the sail !
 Soothe to rest the furrowed seas,
 Before my love, sweet western gale !”

Thus, all to soothe the chieftain’s woe,
 Far from the maid he loved so dear,
 The song arose so soft and slow,
 He seemed her parting sigh to hear.

The lonely deck he paces o’er,
 Impatient for the rising day,
 And still from Crinan’s moonlight shore,
 He turns his eyes to Colonsay.

The moonbeams crisp the curling surge,
 That streaks with foam the ocean green :
 While forward still the rowers urge
 Their course, a female form was seen.

That sea-maid’s form of pearly light,
 Was whiter than the downy spray,
 And round her bosom, heaving bright,
 Her glossy yellow ringlets play.

Borne on a foamy-crested wave,
 She reached amain the bounding prow,
 Then clasping fast the chieftain brave,
 She, plunging, sought the deep below.

Ah! long beside thy feignèd bier,
 The monks the prayers of death shall say,
 And long, for thee, the fruitless tear,
 Shall weep the Maid of Colonsay!

But downwards, like a powerless corse,
 The eddying waves the chieftain bear;
 He only heard the moaning hoarse
 Of waters, murmuring in his ear.

The murmurs sink by slow degrees;
 No more the surges round him rave;
 Lulled by the music of the seas,
 He lies within a coral cave.

In dreamy mood reclines he long,
 Nor dares his trancèd eyes uncloze;
 Till, warbling wild, the sea-maid's song,
 Far in the crystal cavern rose;

Soft as that harp's unseen control;
 In morning dreams which lovers hear,
 Whose strains steal sweetly o'er the soul,
 But never reach the waking ear.

As sunbeams through the tepid air,
 When clouds dissolve the dews unseen,
 Smile on the flowers that bloom more fair,
 And fields that glow with livelier green;

So melting soft the music fell;
 It seemed to soothe the fluttering spray—
 "Say, heardst thou not these wild notes swell?"
 "Ah! 't is the song of Colonsay."

Like one that from a fearful dream
 Awakes, the morning light to view,
 And joys to see the purple beam,
 Yet fears to find the vision true,—

He heard that strain so wildly sweet,
 Which bade his torpid languor fly;
 He feared some spell had bound his feet,
 And hardly dared his limbs to try.

“ This yellow sand this sparry cave,
 Shall bend thy soul to beauty’s sway;
 Canst thou the maiden of the wave
 Compare to her of Colonsay ? ”

Roused by that voice of silver sound,
 From the paved floor he lightly sprung,
 And glancing wild his eyes around,
 Where the fair nymph her tresses wrung,

No form he saw of mortal mould;
 It shone like ocean’s snowy foam;
 Her ringlets waved in living gold,
 Her mirror crystal, pearl her comb.

Her pearly comb the siren took,
 And careless bound her tresses wild;
 Still o’er the mirror stole her look,
 As on the wondering youth she smiled.

Like music from the greenwood tree,
 Again she raised the melting lay;—
 “ Fair warrior, wilt thou dwell with me,
 And leave the Maid of Colonsay ? ”

“ Fair is the crystal hall for me,
 With rubies and with emeralds set;
 And sweet the music of the sea
 Shall sing, when we for love are met.

“ How sweet to dance with gliding feet
 Along the level tide so green;
 Responsive to the cadence sweet,
 That breathes along the moonlight scene ! ”

“ And soft the music of the main
 Rings from the motley tortoise-shell;
 While moonbeams, o’er the watery plain,
 Seem trembling in its fitful swell.

“ How sweet, when billows heave their head,
 And shake their snowy crests on high,
 Serene in Ocean’s sapphire-bed,
 Beneath the tumbling surge to lie ;

“ To trace, with tranquil step, the deep,
 Where pearly drops of frozen dew,
 In concave shells, unconscious, sleep,
 Or shine with lustre, silvery blue !

“ Then shall the summer sun, from far,
 Pour through the wave a softer ray ;
 While diamonds, in a bower of spar,
 At eve shall shed a brighter day.

“ Nor stormy wind, nor wintry gale,
 That o’er the angry ocean sweep,
 Shall e’er our coral groves assail,
 Calm in the bosom of the deep.

“ Through the green meads beneath the sea,
 Enamoured, we shall fondly stray ;
 Then, gentle warrior, dwell with me,
 And leave the Maid of Colonsay !”

“ Though bright thy locks of glistening gold,
 Fair maiden of the foamy main !
 Thy life-blood is the water cold,
 While mine beats high in every vein.

“ If I beneath thy sparry cave,
 Should in thy snowy arms recline,
 Inconstant as the restless wave,
 My heart would grow as cold as thine.”

As cygnet down, proud swelled her breast,
 Her eye confessed the pearly tear ;
 His hand she to her bosom press’d—
 “ Is there no heart for rapture here ?

“ These limbs, sprung from the lucid sea,
 Does no warm blood their currents fill :
 No heart-pulse riot, wild and free,
 To joy, to love’s delirious thrill ?”

“ Though all the splendour of the sea
Around thy faultless beauty shine,
That heart that riots wild and free,
Can hold no sympathy with mine.

“ These sparkling eyes, so wild and gay,
They swim not in the light of love :
The beauteous Maid of Colonsay,
Her eyes are milder than the dove !

“ Even now, within the lonely isle,
Her eyes are dim with tears for me ;
And canst thou think that siren smile
Can lure my soul to dwell with thee ?”

An oozy film her limbs o'erspread ;
Unfolds in length her scaly train :
She tossed, in proud disdain, her head,
And lashed, with webbed fin, the main.

“ Dwell here alone !” the mermaid cried,
“ And view far off the sea-nymphs play ;
Thy prison wall, the azure tide,
Shall bar thy steps from Colonsay.

“ Whene'er, like Ocean's scaly brood,
I cleave with rapid fin, the wave,
Far from the daughter of the flood,
Conceal thee in this coral cave.

“ I feel my former soul return ;
It kindles at thy cold disdain :
And has a mortal dared to spurn
A daughter of the foamy main ?”

She fled ; around the crystal cave
The rolling waves resume their road ;
On the broad portal idly rave,
But enter not the nymph's abode.

And many a weary night went by,
As in the lonely cave he lay ;
And many a sun rolled through the sky,
And poured its beams on Colonsay.

And oft, beneath the silver moon,
He heard afar the mermaid sing,
And oft, to many a melting tune,
The shell-formed lyres of ocean ring.

And when the moon went down the sky,
Still rose, in dreams, his native plain,
And oft he thought his love was by,
And charmed him with some tender strain.

And heart-sick, oft he waked to weep,
When ceased that voice of silver sound ;
And thought to plunge him in the deep,
That walled his crystal cavern round.

But still the ring of ruby red,
Retained its vivid crimson hue ;
And each despairing accent fled,
To find his gentle love so true.

When seven long lonely months were gone,
The mermaid to his cavern came ;
No more mis-shapen from the zone,
But like a maid of mortal frame.

“ O give to me that ruby ring,
That on thy finger glances gay,
And thou shalt hear the mermaid sing
The song thou lov’st of Colonsay.”

“ This ruby ring, of crimson grain,
Shall on thy finger glitter gay,
If thou wilt bear me through the main,
Again to visit Colonsay.”

“ Except thou quit thy former love,
Content to dwell for aye with me,
Thy scorn my finny frame might move,
To tear thy limbs amid the sea.”

“ Then bear me swift along the main,
The lonely isle again to see ;
And when I here return again,
I plight my faith to dwell with thee.”

An oozy film her limbs o'erspread,
While slow unfolds her scaly train,
With gluey fangs her hands were clad,
She lashed, with webbed fin the main.

He grasps the mermaid's scaly sides,
As, with broad fin, she oars her way;
Beneath the silent moon she glides,
That sweetly sleeps on Colonsay.

Proud swells her heart! she deems, at last,
To lure him with her silver tongue,
And, as the shelving rocks she passed,
She raised her voice, and sweetly sung.

In softer sweeter strains she sung,
Slow gliding o'er the moonlight bay,
When light to land the chieftain sprung,
To hail the Maid of Colonsay.

O sad the mermaid's gay notes fell,
And sadly sink remote at sea!
So sadly mourns the writhed shell
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea.

And ever as the year returns,
The charm-bound sailors know the day;
For sadly still the mermaid mourns
The lovely Chief of Colonsay.

SIR ROLAND GRAEME.

THE trumpet has rung on Helvellyn side,
The bugle in Derwent vale;
And an hundred steeds came hurrying fleet,
With an hundred men in mail:
And the gathering cry, and the warning word,
Was, "Fill the quiver and sharpen the sword."

And away they bound—the mountain-deer
 Starts at their helmets' flash;
 And away they go—the brooks call out
 With a hoarse and murmuring dash;
 The foam flung from their steeds as they go
 Strews all their track like the drifting snow.

What foe do they chase? for I see no foe;
 And yet all spurr'd and gored
 Their good steeds fly—say, seek they work
 For the fleet hound or the sword?
 I see no foe—yet a foe they pursue,
 With bow, and brand, and horn and halloo.

Sir Richard spurs on his bonnie brown steed,
 Sir Walter on his black;
 There are a hundred steeds, and each
 Has a Selby on his back:
 And the meanest man there draws a brand
 Has silver spurs and a baron's land.

The Eden is deep in flood—lo! look
 How it dashes from bank to bank!
 To them it seems but the bonnie green lea,
 Or the vale with brackens rank:
 They brave the water and breast the banks,
 And shake the flood and foam from their flanks.

The winding and haunted Eske is nigh,
 With its woodlands wild and green;
 "Our steeds are white with foam; shall we wash
 Their flanks in the river sheen?"
 But their steeds may be doom'd to a sterner task
 Before they pass the woodland Eske.

All at once they stoop on their horses' necks,
 And utter a long shrill shout,
 And bury their spurs in their coursers' flanks,
 And pluck their bright blades out;
 The spurn'd-up turf is scatter'd behind,
 For they go as the hawk when he sails with the wind.

Before them not far on the liliated lea
 There is a fair youth flying ;
 And at his side rides a lovely maid,
 Oft looking back and sighing ;
 On his basnet dances the heron's plume,
 And fans the maid's cheek all of ripe rose bloom.

“ Now do thy best, my bonnie grey steed,
 And carry my true love over,
 And thy corn shall be served in a silver dish,
 And heap'd and running over—
 Oh, bear her safe through dark Eske's fords,
 And leave me to cope with her kinsmen's swords !”

Proud look'd the steed, and had braved the flood
 Had it foam'd a full mile wider ;
 Turn'd his head in joy, and his eye seem'd to say,
 “ I'm proud of my lovely rider :
 And though Selbys stood thick as the leaves on the tree,
 All scatheless I'd bear thee o'er mountain and lea.”

A rushing was heard on the river-banks,
 Wide rung wood, rock, and linn—
 And that instant an hundred horsemen at speed
 Came foaming and fearless in.
 “ Turn back, turn back, thou Scottish loon—
 Let us measure our swords 'neath the light of the moon !”

An hundred horsemen leap'd lightly down,
 With their silver spurs all ringing,
 And drew back, as Sir Richard his good blade bared
 While the signal-trump kept singing :
 Sir Roland Graeme down his mantle threw
 With a martial smile, and his bright sword drew.

With a measuring eye and a measured pace
 Nigher they came and nigher ;
 Then made a bound and made a blow,
 And the smote helms yielded fire :
 December's hail, or the thunder's blast,
 Ne'er flash'd so bright, or fell so fast.

“ Now yield thee, Graeme, and give me back
Lord Selby's beauteous daughter ;
Else I shall sever thy head and heave 't
To thy light love o'er the water.”
“ My sword is steel, Sir Richard, like thine,
And thy head's as loose on thy neck as mine.”

And again their dark eyes flash'd, and again
They closed—on sweet Eske side
The ringdoves sprung from their roosts, for the blows
Were echoing far and wide :
Sir Richard was stark, and Sir Roland was strong ;
And the combat was fierce, but it lasted not long.

There's blood upon young Roland's blade,
There's blood on Sir Richard's brand ;
There's blood shower'd o'er their weeds of steel,
And rain'd on the grassy land ;
But blood to a warrior's like dew to the flower,
The combat but wax'd still more deadly and dour.

A dash was heard in the moonlit Eske,
And up its banks of green
Fair Edith Selby came with a shriek,
And knelt the knights between :
“ Oh, spare him, Sir Richard !”—she held her white hands
All spotted with blood 'neath the merciless brands.

Young Roland look'd down on his true love and smiled,
Sir Richard look'd also, and said,
“ Curse on them that true love would sunder !”—he sheath'd
With his broad palm his berry-brown blade ;
And long may the Selbys, abroad and at home,
Find a friend and a foe like the good gallant Graeme !

THE CLERK'S TWA SONS O'OWSENFORD.

Part the First.

O I WILL sing to you a sang,
 Will grieve your heart full sair ;
 How the Clerk's twa sons o' Owsenford
 Have to learn some unco lear.

They hadna been in fair Parish,¹
 A twelvemonth and a day,
 Till the Clerk's twa sons fell deep in love,
 Wi' the Mayor's dauchter's twae.

And aye as the twa clerks sat and wrote,
 The ladies sewed and sang ;
 There was mair mirth in that chamber,
 Than in a' fair Ferrol's land.

But word's gane to the mighty Mayor,
 As he sailed on the sea,
 That the Clerk's twa sons made licht lemans
 O' his fair dauchters twae.

"If they ha'e wranged my twa dauchters,
 Janet and Marjorie,
 The morn, ere I taste meat or drink,
 Hie hangit they shall be."

And word's gane to the Clerk himself,
 As he was drinking wine,
 That his twa sons at fair Parish
 Were bound in prison strang.

Then up and spak' the Clerk's ladye,
 And she spak' tenderlie :
 "O tak' wi' ye a purse o' gowd,
 Or even tak' ye three ;
 And if ye canna get William,
 Bring Henry hame to me."

(1) Paris.

O sweetly sang the nightingale,
 As she sat on the wand;
 But sair, sair mourned Owsenford,
 As he gaed in the strand.

When he came to their prison strang,
 He rade it round about,
 And at a little shot-window,
 His sons were looking out.

“O lie ye there, my sons,” he said,
 “For owsen or for kye?¹
 Or what is it that ye lie for,
 Sae sair bound as ye lie?”—

—“We lie not here for owsen, father;
 Nor yet do we for kye;
 But it's for a little o' dear-boucht love,
 Sae sair bound as we lie.

“Oh, borrow us, borrow us, father,” they said,
 “For the luvè we bear to thee!”—
 —“O never fear, my pretty sons,
 Weel borrowed ye shall be.”

Then he's gane to the mighty Mayor,
 And he spak' courteouslie;
 “Will ye grant my twa sons' lives,
 Either for gold or fee?
 Or will ye be sae gude a man,
 As grant them baith to me?”

“I'll no grant ye your twa sons' lives,
 Neither for gold nor fee;
 Nor will I be sae gude a man,
 As gi'e them baith to thee;
 But before the morn at twal o'clock,
 Ye'll see them hangit hie!”

Ben it came the Mayor's daughters,
 Wi' kirtle coat alone;
 Their eyes did sparkle like the gold,
 As they tripped on the stone.

(1) *i. e.* for stealing oxen or cows.

“ Will ye gi'e us our loves, father ?
 For gold or yet for fee ?
 Or will ye take our own sweet lives,
 And let our true loves be ? ”

He's ta'en a whip into his hand,
 And lash'd them wondrous sair :
 “ Gae to your bowers, ye vile limmers,
 Ye'se never see them mair. ”

Then out it speaks auld Owsenford,
 A sorry man was he :
 “ Gang to your bouirs, ye lilye flouirs ;
 For a' this maunna be. ”

Then out it speaks him Hynde Henry :
 “ Come here, Janet, to me ;
 Will ye gi'e me my faith and troth,
 And love, as I ga'e thee ? ”

“ Ye sall ha'e your faith and troth,
 Wi' God's blessing and mine. ”
 And twenty times she kissed his mouth,
 Her father looking on.

Then out it speaks him gay William :
 “ Come here, sweet Marjorie ;
 Will ye gi'e me my faith and troth,
 And love, as I ga'e thee ? ”

“ Yes, ye sall ha'e your faith and troth,
 Wi' God's blessing and mine. ”
 And twenty times she kissed his mouth,
 Her father looking on.

“ O ye'll tak' aff your twa black hats,
 Lay them down on a stone,
 That nane may ken that ye are clerks,
 Till ye are putten down. ”

The bonnie clerks they died that morn ;
 Their loves died lang ere noon ;
 And the waefu' Clerk o' Owsenford
 To his lady has gane hame.

Part the Second.

His lady sat on her castle wa',
Beholding dale and down ;
And there she saw her ain gude lord
Come walking to the toun.

“Ye're welcome hame, my ain gude lord,
Ye're welcome hame to me ;
But whereaway are my twa sons ?
Ye suld hae brought them wi' ye.”

“O they are putten to a deeper lear,
And to a higher scule :
Your ain twa sons will no be hame
Till the hallow days o' Yule.”

“O sorrow, sorrow, come mak' my bed ;
And, dule, come lay me down ;
For I will neither eat nor drink,
Nor set a fit on groun' !”

The hallow days o' Yule were come,
And the nights were lang and mirk,
When in and cam' her ain twa sons,
And their hats made o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheuch ;
But at the gates o' Paradise
That birk grew fair eneuch.

“Blow up the fire, now, maidens mine,
Bring water from the well ;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my twa sons are well.

“O eat and drink, my merry-men a',
The better shall ye fare ;
For my twa sons they are come hame
To me for evermair.”

And she has made to them a bed,
 She's made it large and wide ;
 And she's ta'en her mantel her about,
 Sat down at the bed side.

But the young cock crew in the merry Linkum,
 And the wild fowl chirped for day ;
 And the aulder to the younger said,
 " Brother, we maun away.

" The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
 The channerin worm doth chide ;
 Gin we be missed out o' our place,
 A sair pain we maun bide."

" Lie still, lie still a little wee while,
 Lie still but if we may ;
 Gin my mother miss us when she wakes,
 She'll gae mad ere it be day."

O it's they've ta'en up ther mother's mantil
 And they've hung it on a pin :
 " O lang may ye hing, my mother's mantil,
 Ere ye hap us again."

SIR PATRICK SPENS.

THE king sits in Dunfermline town,
 Drinking the blude-red wine ;
 " O whare will I get a skeely skipper,
 To sail this new ship o' mine !"—

O up and spake an eldern knight,
 Sat at the king's right knee,—
 " Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
 That ever sail'd the sea."—

Our king has written a braid letter,
 And seal'd it with his hand,
 And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
 Was walking on the strand.

“ To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem ;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame.”—

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
Sae loud loud laughed he ;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his e'e.

“ O wha is this has done this deed,
And tauld the king o' me,
To send us out, at this time of the year,
To sail upon the sea ?

“ Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem ;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis we must fetch her hame.”—

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn,
Wi' a' the speed they may ;
They ha'e landed in Noroway,
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week,
In Noroway, but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say—

“ Ye Scottishmen spend a' our king's goud,
And a' our queenis fee.”—

“ Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud !
Fu' loud I hear ye lie ;

“ For I ha'e brought as much white monie,
As gane my men and me,
And I ha'e brought a half-fou of gude red goud,
Out o'er the sea wi' me.

“ Make ready, make ready, my merrymen a' !
Our gude ship sails the morn.”—

“ Now, ever alake, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm !

“ I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
 Wi' the auld moon in her arm ;
 And, if we gang to sea, master,
 I fear we'll come to harm.”

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
 A league but barely three,
 When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
 And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the topmasts lap,
 It was sic a deadly storm ;
 And the waves cam o'er the broken ship,
 Till a' her sides were torn.

“ O where will I get a gude sailor,
 To take my helm in hand,
 Till I get up to the tall top-mast,
 To see if I can spy land ?”

“ O here am I, a sailor gude,
 To take the helm in hand,
 Till you go up to the tall top-mast ;
 But I fear you'll ne'er spy land.”—

He hadna gane a step, a step,
 A step but barely ane,
 When a boult flew out of our goodly ship,
 And the salt sea it came in.

“ Gae, fetch a web o' the silken claith,
 Another o' the twine,
 And wap them into our ship's side,
 And let nae the sea come in.”—

They fetch'd a web o' the silken claith,
 Another o' the twine,
 And they wapp'd them round that gude ship's side,
 But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords
 To weet their coal-black shoon !
 But lang or a' the play was play'd,
 They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed,
That floated on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord's son,
That never mair cam hame.

The ladyes wrang their fingers white,
The maidens tore their hair,
A' for the sake of their true loves,—
For them they'll see nae mair.

O lang, lang, may the ladyes sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang, may the maidens sit,
With their goud kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
For them they'll see nae mair.

Half owre, half owre to Aberdour,
'Tis fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet!



Glenfinlas.



“ For them the viewless forms of air obey,
Their bidding heed, and at their back repair ;
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless oft, like moody madness stare,
And see the phantom train their secret work prepare.”

O HONE a rie' ! O hone a rie' !¹
The bride of Albin's line is o'er,
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree ;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

Oh, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief that never feared a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
How deadly thine unerring bow !

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
As down from Lenny's Pass you bore.

(1) Alas for the chief.

But o'er his hills, on festal day,
How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane tree;
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced, with Highland glee!

Cheered by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar;
But now the loud lament we swell,
Oh, ne'er to see Lord Ronald more!

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark brown game,
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy; whom in Columba's isle,
The seer's prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den
The chiefs have ta'en their distant way,
And scoured the deep Glenfinlas' glen.

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board:
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid;
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook
 The solitary cabin stood,
 Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
 Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
 When three successive days had flown ;
 And summer mist in dewy balm
 Steeped heathy bank, and mossy stone.

The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
 Afar her dubious radiance shed,
 Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
 And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
 Their sylvan fair the chiefs enjoy ;
 And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
 As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

—“ What lack we here to crown our bliss,
 While thus the pulse of joy beats high !
 What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
 Her panting breath, and melting eye ?

“ To chase the deer of yonder shades,
 This morning left their father's pile
 The fairest of our mountain maids,
 The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

“ Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
 And dropped the tear, and heaved the sigh,
 But vain the lover's wily art,
 Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

“ But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
 While far with Mary I am flown,
 Of other hearts to cease her care,
 And find it hard to guard her own.

“ Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
 The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
 Unmindful of her charge and me,
 Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.

“Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St. Oran’s rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?”—

—“Since Enrick’s fight, since Morna’s death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

“E’en then, when o’er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp’s wild wailings flow,
On me the seer’s sad spirit came.

“The last dread curse of angry Heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy, was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.

“The bark thou saw’st, yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban’s bay,
My eye beheld her dashed and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

“Thy Fergus too—thy sister’s son,
Thou saw’st, with pride, the gallant’s power,
As marching ’gainst the lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

“Thou only saw’st their tartans wave,
As down Benvoirlich’s side they wound,
Heardst but the pibroch, answering brave
To many a target clanging round.

“I heard the groans, I marked the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He poured his clan’s resistless roar.

“And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the melting kiss,—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

“ I see the death-damps chill thy brow ;
 I hear thy Warning Spirit cry ;
 The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now !
 No more is given to gifted eye ! ”——

——“ Alone, enjoy thy dreary dreams,
 Sad prophet of the evil hour !
 Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
 Because to-morrow's storm may lour ?

“ Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
 Clangillian's chieftain ne'er shall fear ;
 His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
 Though doom'd to stain the Saxon's spear.

“ E'en now to meet me in yon dell,
 My Mary's buskins brush the dew. ”——
 He spoke, nor bade the chief farewell,
 But called his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour returned each hound ;
 In rushed the rousers of the deer ;
 They howled in melancholy sound,
 Then closely couch behind the Seer.

No Ronald yet ; though midnight came,
 And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
 As, bending o'er the dying flame,
 He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
 And sudden cease their moaning howl ;
 Close pressed to Moy they mark their fears
 By shivering limbs, and stifled growl.

Untouched, the harp began to ring,
 As softly, slowly, oped the door ;
 And shook responsive every string,
 As light a footstep pressed the floor.

And, by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
 Close by the minstrel's side was seen
 An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
 All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem ;
 Chilled was her cheek, her bosom bare,
 As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
 She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush she softly said,
 " O gentle Huntsman, hast thou seen,
 In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
 A lovely maid in vest of green :

" With her a chief in Highland pride ;
 His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
 The mountain dirk adorns his side,
 Far on the wind his tartans flow ?"—

—" And who art thou ? and who are they ?"
 All ghastly gazing, Moy replied :
 " And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
 Dare thou thus roam Glenfinlas' side ?"—

—" Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
 Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
 Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
 The castle of the bold Glengyle.

" To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
 Our woodland course this morn we bore,
 And haply met, while wandering here,
 The son of great Macgillianore.

" Oh aid me, then, to seek the pair,
 Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost ;
 Alone, I dare not venture there,
 Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."—

—" Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there,
 Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
 Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
 Which still must rise when mortals sleep."—

—" Oh first, for pity's gentle sake,
 Guide a lone wanderer on her way !
 For I must cross the haunted brake,
 And reach my father's towers ere day."—

—“ First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
 And thrice a Pater-noster say;
 Then kiss with me the holy rood:
 So shall we safely wend our way.”—

—“ Oh shame to knighthood, strange and foul!
 Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
 And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
 Which best befits thy sullen vow.

“ Not so, by high Dunlathmon’s fire,
 Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
 When gaily rung thy raptured lyre,
 To beauteous Morna’s melting eye.”—

Wild stared the Minstrel’s eyes of flame,
 And high his sable locks arose,
 And quick his colour went and came,
 As fear and rage alternate rose.

—“ And thou! when by the blazing oak
 I lay, to her and love resigned,
 Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
 Or sailed ye on the midnight wind!

“ Not thine a race of mortal blood,
 Nor old Glengyle’s pretended line;
 Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood,
 Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.”

He muttered thrice St. Oran’s rhyme,
 And thrice St. Fillan’s powerful prayer;
 Then turned him to the eastern clime,
 And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o’er his harp, he flung
 His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
 And loud, and high, and strange, they rung
 As many a magic change they find.

Tall waxed the spirit’s altering form,
 Till to the roof her stature grew;
 Then, mingling with the rising storm,
 With one wild yell, away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear :
 The slender hut in fragments flew ;
 But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
 Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.]

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
 Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise ;
 High o'er the Minstrel's head they sail,
 And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
 As ceased the more than mortal yell ;
 And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
 Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

Next, dropped from high a mangled arm ;
 The fingers strained a half-drawn blade :
 And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
 Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling-field,
 Streamed the proud crest of high Benmore ;
 That arm the broad claymore could wield,
 Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills !
 Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen !
 There never son of Albin's hills
 Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen !

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
 At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
 Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
 The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we—behind the Chieftain's shield,
 No more shall we in safety dwell ;
 None leads the people to the field—
 And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie' ! O hone a rie' !
 The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
 And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree ;
 We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

The above ballad is founded on the following tradition:—

While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary hut, and making merry over their good cheer, one of them expressed a wish, that they had some ladies to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two figures, under the assumed guise of beautiful young women, entered the hut, habited in green, dancing and singing. One of the hunters left the hut with one of them, but his friend remained, and suspecting that the fair ones were but demons in disguise, continued to play some consecrated strain, until day came, when the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend; who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend, into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called, *The Glen of the Green Women*.

Glenfinlas is a tract of forest ground, lying in the Highlands of Perthshire, near Loch Katrine and the Trosachs.



Lord William.



No eye beheld when William plunged
Young Edmund in the stream ;
No human ear but William's heard
Young Edmund's drowning scream.

Submissive all the vassals own'd
The murderer for their lord ;
And he, the rightful heir possess'd
The house of Erlingford.

The ancient house of Erlingford
Stood midst a fair domain ;
And Severn's ample waters near
Roll'd through the fertile plain.

And often the wayfaring man
Would love to linger there,
Forgetful of his onward road,
To gaze on scenes so fair.

But never could Lord William dare
To gaze on Severn's stream :
In every wind that swept its waves
He heard young Edmund scream.

In vain at midnight's silent hour
Sleep closed the murderer's eyes;
In every dream the murderer saw
Young Edmund's form arise.

In vain, by restless conscience driven,
Lord William left his home,
Far from the scenes that saw his guilt,
In pilgrimage to roam.

To other climes the pilgrim fled,
But could not fly despair;
He sought his home again, but peace
Was still a stranger there.

Each hour was tedious long, yet swift
The months appear'd to roll;
And now the day return'd that shook
With terror William's soul.

A day that William never felt
Return without dismay,
Full well had conscience kalender'd
Young Edmund's dying day.

A fearful day was that! the rains
Fell fast, with tempest roar,
And the swoln tide of Severn spread
Far on the level shore.

In vain Lord William sought the feast,
In vain he quaff'd the bowl,
And strove with noisy mirth to drown
The anguish of his soul.

The tempest at its sudden swell
In gusty howlings came,
With cold and death-like feelings seem'd
To thrill his shuddering frame.

Reluctant now, as night came on,
His lonely couch he press'd;
And, wearied out, he sunk to sleep,
To sleep, but not to rest.

Beside that couch his brother's form,
 Lord Edmund, seem'd to stand,
 Such and so pale as when in death
 He grasp'd his brother's hand :

Such and so pale his face as when,
 With faint and faltering tongue,
 To William's care, a dying charge,
 He left his orphan son.

"I bade thee, with a father's love,
 My orphan Edmund guard ;
 Well, William, hast thou kept thy charge ;
 Now take thy due reward."

He started up, each limb convulsed
 With agonising fear ;
 He only heard the storm of night—
 'Twas music to his ear.

When lo! the voice of loud alarm
 His inmost soul appals,
 "What, ho! Lord William, rise in haste!
 The water saps thy walls!"

He rose in haste: beneath the walls
 He saw the flood appear ;
 It hemm'd him round, 'twas midnight now,
 No human aid was near.

He heard the shout of joy, for now
 A boat approach'd the wall,
 And, eager to the welcome aid,
 They crowd for safety all.

"My boat is small," the boatman cried,
 "This dangerous haste forbear!
 Wait other aid; this little bark
 But one from hence can bear."

Lord William leap'd into the boat,
 "Haste—haste to yonder shore ;
 And ample wealth shall well reward ;
 Ply swift and strong the oar."

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
Went light along the stream ;
Sudden Lord William heard a cry
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

The boatman paus'd,—“methought I heard
A child's distressful cry!”
“'Twas but the howling wind of night,”
Lord William made reply.

“Haste, haste—ply swift and strong the oar!
Haste—haste across the stream!”
Again Lord William heard a cry
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

“I heard a child's distressful scream,”
The boatman cried again,
“Nay, hasten on—the night is dark—
And we should search in vain.”

“Oh God! Lord William, dost thou know
How dreadful 'tis to die?
And canst thou without pity hear
A child's expiring cry?”

“How horrible it is to sink
Beneath the chilly stream,
To stretch the powerless arms in vain,
In vain for help to scream?”

The shriek again was heard. It came
More deep, more piercing loud,
That instant o'er the flood the moon
Shone through a broken cloud.

And near them they beheld a child,
Upon a crag he stood,
A little crag, and all around
Was spread the rising flood.

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
Approach'd his resting place,
The moon-beam shone upon the child,
And show'd how pale his face.

“ Now reach thine hand ! ” the boatman cried,
“ Lord William, reach and save ! ”
The child stretched forth his little hands,
To grasp the hand he gave.

Then William shriek'd ; the hand he touch'd
Was cold, and damp, and dead !
He felt young Edmund in his arms,
A heavier weight than lead.

The boat sunk down ; the murderer sunk
Beneath the avenging stream ;
He rose, he scream'd ;—no human ear
Heard William's drowning scream.

ROSABELLE.

O LISTEN, listen, ladies gay !
No haughty feat of arms I tell ;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

“ Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew !
And, gentle lady, deign to stay !
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy Firth to-day.

“ The blackening wave is edged with white ;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly ;
The fishers have heard the water-sprite,
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

“ Last night the gifted seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round lady gay ;
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch :
Why cross the gloomy Firth to-day ? ”

“ 'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my lady-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“ ’Tis not because the ring they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well ;
 But that my sire the wine will chide
 If ’tis not fill’d by Rosabelle.”

O’er Roslin hall that dreary night
 A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam ;
 ’Twas broader than the watch-fire’s light,
 And redder than the bright moon-beam.

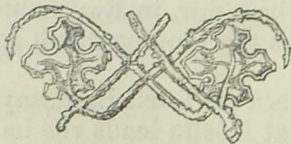
It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,
 It ruddied all the copse-wood glen ;
 ’Twas seen from Dryden’s groves of oak,
 And seen from cavern’d Hawthornden.

Seem’d all on fire, within, around,
 Deep sacristy, and altar pale ;
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
 And glimmer’d all the dead men’s mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair :
 So still they blaze when fate is nigh
 The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin’s barons bold
 Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;
 Each one the holy vault doth hold ;
 But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle !

And each St. Clair was buried there,
 With candle, with book, and with knell ;
 But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
 The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.



Glossary.

Scottish words are denoted by s., French by f.

A.

Acton, a kind of armour made of taffeta, or leather quilted, &c., worn under the habergeon, to save the body from bruises.

Aff, s. off.

Alake, alas.

Ancyent, *Ancient*, a flag, a banner.

Ane, s. one, an, a.

Angel, a gold coin worth 10s.

B.

Ba', s. ball.

Bacheleere, knight.

Bairn, s. child.

Bale, evil, mischief, misery.

Band, bond, covenant, vow.

Basnet, *Basnite*, *Bassonette*, helmet.

Bedeene, immediately.

Bedeast, deafened.

Beforne, before.

Beheard, heard.

Belive, immediately, presently.

Ben, *Beene*, be, are.

Ben, s. the inner room. "But o' house," means the outer part of the house, outer room, viz. that part of the house into which you first enter from the street. "Ben o' house," is the inner room, or more retired part of the house, (from "by out" and "by in.")

Bent, s. long grass, also wild fields, where bents, &c. grow.

Besprent, besprinkled.

Big, s. to build.

Blan, *Blanne*, *did blin*, linger, stop.

Blee, colour, complexion.

Blent, ceased; also blended.

Blin, cease, give over.

Blinks, s. twinkle, sparkle.

Bluid, *Blude*, s. blood.

Borrowe, *Borowe*, pledge, surety.

Borrowe, to redeem by a pledge.

Bote, *Boot*, *Boote*, advantage, help, assistance.

Bower, *Bowre*, *Bouir*, any bowed or arched room, a parlour, chamber, also a dwelling in general: perhaps from the Icelandic *Bowan*, to dwell.

Bowne, to, going to, accustomed to.

Brae, s. the brow or side of a hill, a declivity.

Braes of Yarrow, s. the hilly banks of the river Yarrow.

Brand, sword.

Brast, burst.

Brenn, s. burn.

Brent, burnt; also high, steep.

Bridal (properly bride-all), the nuptial feast: also s. Bridle.

Brigg, s. bridge.

Brodginge, pricking.

Burn, s. brook.

But if, unless.

Byll, *Bill*, an ancient kind of halbert, or battle-axe.

C.

Caitiff, a slave.

Care-bed, bed of care, or grief.

Carle, churl, clown. Also s. a strong hale old man.

Carpe, to speak, recite; also to censure.

Carlsh, churlish, discourteous.
Casque, f. helmet.
Child, knight;—*Children*, knights.
Chucking, s. throwing.
Church-ale, a wake, a feast in commemoration of the dedication of a church.
Churl, clown, a person of low birth, a villain.
Cryance, belief, f. *Creance* [whence recreate]. But sometimes it seems to signify fear, f. *Crainte*, as in p. 59.

D.

Débonnaire, f. gentle, gracious.
Deerlye dight, richly fitted out.
Deemed, doomed, judged, &c.; thus, in the Isle of Man, judges are called deemsters.
Deer, *Deir*, s. dear; also, hurt, trouble.
Deerly, precious, richly.
Dern, s. secret, to hide.
Descreeve, describe.
Dight, *Dyght*, decked, put on.
Dill, dole, grief, pain.
Dill I drye, pain I suffer. *Dill was dight*, grief was upon him.
Dole (s. *dool*), grief.
Doublet, a man's inner garment, waistcoat.
Dour, s. stiff, obstinate.
Dreips, s. drips, drops.
Dule, s. *Duel*, *Dol*, *Dole*, grief.

E.

Ee, s. *Eie*, eye. *Een*, *Eyne*, eyes.
Eld, age.
Eldridge, *Scotice*, *Elriche*, *Elritch*, *Elriche*; wild, hideous, ghostly. Also, lonesome, uninhabited, except by spectres, &c.
Erne, eagle.

F.

Fa', s. fall.
Faem, s. foam.
Farden, flared, flashed.
Fare, go, pass, travel.
Fay, faith; also fairy.
Fend, defend.
Fere, *feere*, fear; also, companion, spouse.
Ferly, a wonder.
Fett, *Fette*, fetched.
Firth, *Frith*, s. an arm of the sea.

Fit, *Fitte*, *Fytte*, part or division of a song; also a strain of music.
Fro, *Froe*, (s. *frae*,) from.

G.

Gare, *Gar*, s. make, cause, force, compel.
Gest, act, feat, story, history.
Giff, if.
Gogging eyen, goggle eyes.
Gorget, the dress of the neck.
Goud, *Goud*, s. gold.
Gramarye, magic.
Gree, s. prize, a victory. Also, f. pleasure.
Grype, a griffin.

H.

Hawberk, a coat of mail, consisting of iron rings, &c.
Hend, kind, gentle.
Hest, command, injunction.
Hett, *Hight*, bid, call, command.
Hight, engage, engaged, promised; also, named, called.
Hie, high.
Holtes, woods, groves; also, sometimes hills.
Houzle, give the sacrament to.

I.

Ilka, s. each, every one.
In fere, together.
Jimp, s. slender.

K.

Kame, *Kaim*, s. comb.
Kempes, warriors.
Kemperye-man, soldier, warrior, fighting-man.
Kerchief, *Kever-chef*, handkerchief.
Kirk, s. church.
Kirk-wa, s. church wall, or sometimes church-yard-wall.
Kirtle, a petticoat, woman's gown.
Kists, s. chests.
Knight's fee, such a portion of land as required the possessor to serve with man and horse.
Kowe, cow.
Kye, s. cows.
Kyrtell, a man's under garment.

L.

Laith, s. loth.
Laithly, loathsome, hideous.
Lap, s. leaped, sprung.
Layden, laid.
Laye, law.

Lay-land, land that is not ploughed, green-sward.

Lea, lea, field, pasture.

Lear, s. learning.

Leaman, *Lemar*, lover.

Leer, *Lere*, look, face, complexion.

Leeveth, believeth.

Lever, rather.

Libbard, leopard.

Liege-men, vassals, subjects.

Lift, sky.

Lin, delay.

Limmer, a term of reproach applied to females—a vile hussey.

Lither, idle, worthless, naughty, forward.

Lodlye, loathsome.

Lope, leaped.

Losel, a worthless fellow.

Louted, *Lowlode*, bowed, did obeisance.

Laugh (s. leuch) laughed.

Loon, *Loun*, fellow, rascal, from the Irish *Liun*, slothful.

M.

Mahound, *Mahowne*, Mahomet

Marish, marsh, marshy.

Marrow, s. equal, companion.

Mark, s. *Merk*, a coin, in value 13s. 4d.

Mayd, *Mayde*, *May*, maid.

Meete, alike, equal.

Mickle, much, great.

Minged, mentioned.

Mirk, s. dark, black

Mores, hills, wild downs.

Mosses, swampy grounds, covered with peat moss.

N.

Nams, names.

Neigh him neare, approach him near.

Nee, *Ne*, nigh, to approach.

Neist, *Nyest*, next, nearest.

Nicked him of naye, nicked him with a refusal.

Norland, s. northern.

Nourice, s. nurse.

O.

Owsen, s. oxen.

P.

Pall, mantle, or robe of state. *Purple and pall*, i. e. a purple robe or cloak.

Palmer, a pilgrim, who, having been at the Holy Land, carried a palm branch in his hand.

Paramour, lover.

Pallion, *Pavilliane*, pavillion, tent.

Pardè, *Perdie*, verily.

Paynim, pagan.

Peere, *Perè*, *Peer*, equal.

Prestly, *Prestlye*, readily, quickly.

Pricked, spurred forward, travelled at a round pace.

Q.

Quaigh, cup, goblet.

R.

Rade, s. rode.

Rede, *Reade*, advise, advice.

Renish, *Renisht*, perhaps a derivation from *Reniteo*, to shine.

Rive, deprive.

Rood, *Roode*, cross.

Row, *Roud*, s. roll, rolled.

Ruth, pity.

Ruthe, pity, woe.

S.

Sair, s. sore.

Sark, s. shirt.

Sauch, s. willow.

Saut, s. salt.

Scathe, hurt, injury.

Scule, s. school.

Sed, said.

Seely, simple, silly.

Sheene, *Shene*, shining.

Shent, shamed, disgraced, abused.

Sheuch, s. hollow, dell.

Shimmered, glittered.

Shoen, (s. *Shoone*) shoes.

Shrive, confess, hear confession, absolve.

Skeely, skilful.

Skipper, sailor, ship-master.

Stode, split.

Stone, slain.

Sloe, slay.

Sloughe, slew.

Soldain, *Soldan*, *Sowdan*, sultan.

Sooth, truth, true; *Soothly*, truly.

Speere, window.

Sped, speeded, succeeded, accomplished.

Spole, shoulder, arm-pit; f. *espaule*.

Sprente, sprung out, gushed.

Stalwart, *Stalworth*, stout.

Stance, position, appointed place.

Stane, *Stean*, stone.

Stark, stiff; also entirely.

Stead, *Stede*, place.

Stint, stop, stopped.

Stower, Stowre, stir, disturbance, fight.

Stown, stolen.

Stowre, strong, robust, fierce.

Stroke, Stroake, struck.

Style, s. wooden gate.

Sumpters, horses that carry clothes, furniture, &c.

Swarvde, Swarved, climbed, or, as it is now expressed in the midland counties, *Swarmed*. To *swarm*, is to draw oneself up a tree, or any other thing, clinging to it with the legs and arms.

Swith, quickly.

T.

Tett, s. tuft of hair.

Till, to draw, entice.

Tine, Tint, s. lose, lost.

Tone, T'one, the one.

Twal, s. twelve.

U.

Unkempt, uncombed.

Unmacklye, mis-shapen.

W.

Wap, s. to stuff into, roll round.

Warre, s. worse.

Warsell, s. wrestle.

Weede, Weedes, clothing, dress.

Weetless, unknowing.

Wend, go.

Whilere, a little while ago.

Wightlye, vigorously.

Wood-wroth, s. furiously enraged.

Wode, Wod, Wood, (s. *wud*.) wood, also mad.

Wraith, s. spirit.

Wys, Wiss, know.

Wyste, knew.

Y.

Y-wrought, wrought.

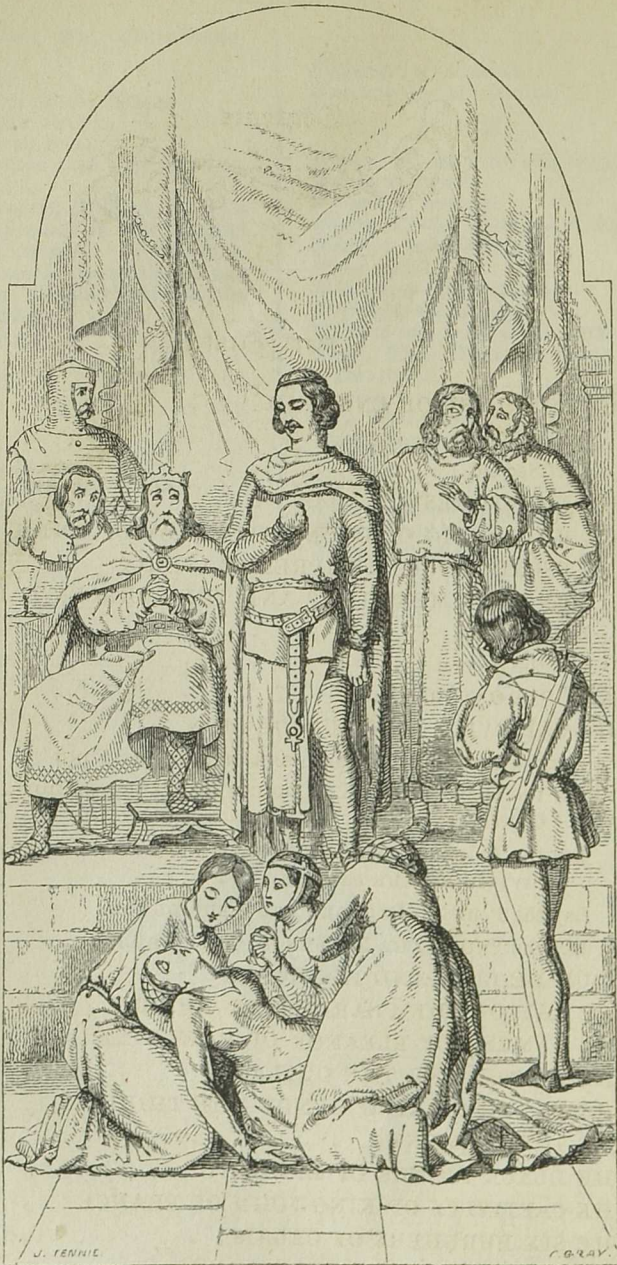
Y-wys, truly, verily.

Yule, Christmas.



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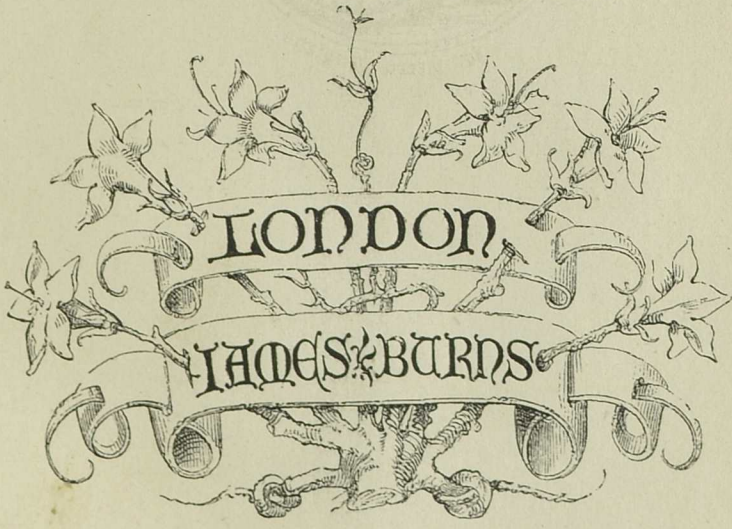
G. GRAY



Lays and Ballads

from
English History
etc.

By S. M.



LONDON

JAMES BURNS

TO

THE SEVEN DEAR CHILDREN

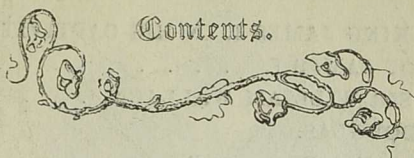
FOR WHOSE AMUSEMENT THESE VERSES WERE ORIGINALLY WRITTEN

THEY ARE NOW MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

Sanct George



for merrie England.



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Lays and Ballads.

PART FIRST.

Reign of William the Conqueror, 1066-1087.

The Conquest of England.

PART I.

DUKE WILLIAM stood on the Norman shore,
With all his merry men round ;
And he will sail the blue seas o'er,
To land on English ground.

Saint Edward made him, ere he died,
Heir to the English throne ;
But traitor Harold, in his pride,
Hath seized it for his own.

So the duke hath summon'd his vassals brave
From castle, cot, and tower ;
And he will cross the rushing wave
To reckon with Harold's power.

They came, his liegemen stout and true,
With the serfs whom they commanded ;
Some brought many, and some brought few,
But none came empty-handed.

By the trumpet-sound they gather'd around,
And the drum's inspiring roar ;
And their spears shone bright as the stars of night
When they muster'd on the shore.

Whence comes yon graceful bark which glides
To the spot where the duke is standing,
And leaps the crests of the dancing tides
With an air of proud commanding ?

The sails are of silk, and flutteringly
They wave in the breezes mild ;
At the prow is a sculptured effigy
Of a fair and smiling child.

That smiling boy is carved in gold,
And the flag which gaily streams
Is thick with gems on every fold—
A palace that fair ship seems.

But who is the lady of lofty brow,
Bright eye, and arching lip,
Who waveth her white hand from the prow
Of the gay and stately ship ?

She is known from afar by her graceful air,
And the circlet on her brows ;
'Tis the Duchess Matilda, wise and fair,
Duke William's honour'd spouse.

To land full lightly vaulted she,
And up to the duke she came—
“ My lord, accept this ship from me,
The Mora is its name.

Its chambers are deck'd for a monarch fit,
With cushions of velvet piled ;
The form at the prow—look well on it—
'Tis the form of our youngest child.

My hand it was that 'broider'd the sail,
Though the tear was in mine eye—
God send my lord a favouring gale,
And a joyous victory !”

“ Thanks, lady, thanks,” the duke replied,
“ Right princely is thy gift ;
Soon leaping from its painted side,
My good sword will I lift.

When its gay pennon streameth far,
My heart shall look to thee
As the pilot's eye to the northern star,
Guiding us o'er the sea.

Farewell, my lady and my wife,
So loyal, fair, and true ;
If I come back to thee with life,
I will come with honour too."

"Farewell, my hero—knighthood's flower—
My husband and my lord!"
Right tender was that parting hour ;
Right fond each parting word.

The lady's tears, e'en while she spake,
Did fast and freely start ;
And many a sigh did slowly break
From Duke William's mighty heart.

"Adieu!" he cried : in speechless grief
Matilda sought her bower ;
And to his good ship sprang the chief,
With all his armèd power.

Away with a breeze that curls the seas
And scatters the foam as a cloud,
Each light bark rides on the bounding tides,
Like a knight on a courser proud.

They sail'd all the night ; but when morning shone bright,
And the duke he gazed around,
Not a sail could be traced on the ocean's wide waste,
Not a bark could there be found.

"How may this be," quoth the duke at last,
"That we are thus left alone ?
My wife's fair ship, thou travellest fast ;
Of our comrades see I none.

Go up to the mast-head speedily,
My squire. What meets thine eye?"
"Nought save the grey far-stretching sea,
And the cloudy morning sky."

"Now, by my faith," said Duke William then,
"Ill shall we fare I trow,
If I am met without my men
By the angry English now."

Go up again—what seest thou now,
My squire so brave and true?"
"Where the blue sea-line with the sky doth join
A darksome speck I view."

"A babe may grow to a monarch free,
To a storm a little cloud ;
God send that tiny speck may be
My gallant ship and proud !

Go up once more—gaze o'er the sea :
Good squire, what seest thou there?"
"Hurra !" cried he, "'tis a forest I see
Of tall masts rising fair.

They are coming, they are coming, as come the clouds
When the storm gathers fast on high ;
When noiseless and light, and too swift for sight,
They cover the wide blue sky."

The sea grew white with a thousand sails
On its distant billows riding,
Spreading their wings to the wanton gales,
Like the birds around them gliding.

The fresh breeze fann'd the Conqueror's cheek,
And the Conqueror's heart beat high—
“ Our arms are strong, and our foes are weak,
We are sailing to victory.”

PART II.

The morn was bright, the sky was blue,
And each Norman heart was gay,
When swift as a bird the Mora flew
Into fair Hastings bay.

Full soon Duke William sprang to land
With a proud and knightly grace ;
But he miss'd his step on the treach'rous sand,—
He fell upon his face !

Now foul befall thee, treach'rous shore,
Thou hast laid a good knight low ;
A knight who hath never fallen before
By the stroke of any foe.

Ill be thy name, thou faithless sand :
Of foes we may all beware ;
But how can the brave heart understand
That which is false and fair ?

Pale grew the cheeks of the Normans then,—
“ An omen !” they loudly cry :
“ Let us go o'er the main to our homes again ;
We will not stay here to die.”

But up leap'd the joyous duke from earth,
And shook his fair plume on high ;
Untamed was his laugh in its ringing mirth,
Unquench'd was his proud bright eye.

His grasp it was full of the yellow sea-sand,
And he shouted, " My men, what ho !
See, I have England in my hand—
Do ye think I will let it go ?"

Loudly then answer'd his warriors bold :
" True be thy daring word !
We will follow thee till our hearts wax cold—
God save our conquering lord !"

They built on the shore a fort of wood,
They framed it cunningly ;
Its beams so strong, and its walls so good,
They had brought with them o'er the sea.

But they were not aware that a knight stood there,
And watch'd them whiles they wrought ;
Behind an oak-tree unseen stood he,
And gazed on the growing fort.

Then with eager speed he mounted his steed,
And away to Earl Harold he hied.
" Evil, great king, are the news I bring—
Duke William hath cross'd the tide.

Duke William of Normandy, mighty and strong,
He hath landed at Pevensie ;
And with him a fierce and a terrible throng
Of the knights of his own countrie.

They have built them a fort upon Hastings beach,
The like was never known ;
No time is there now for dallying speech,
Arm, arm thee for thy throne !”

“ I laugh at thy news,” Lord Harold he cried ;
“ For in annal and in song
Shall be told, how we taught this man of pride
His weakness and his wrong.

Arm, my brave Saxons, mount and arm—
Ye know that our cause is just ;
Ere a night and a day hath glided away
Our foes shall bite the dust !”

The armies are marching—the two great hosts—
Behold, they are sweeping past ;
The sound of their step on the echoing coasts
Was like a rushing blast.

They met when the western sun grew pale,
At twilight’s peaceful hour ;
When eve was spreading her soft grey veil
O’er hill, and field, and tower.

Sternly they gazed on each bright array,
By the moonbeams rising slow ;
Like men who felt that by break of day
They should stand as foe to foe.

How did the Saxons pass that night ?
In wassail and revelry ;
Reckless they drank till the pure moon sank,
And the sun rose from the sea.

How did the Normans pass that night ?
In fasting and in prayer ;
They kneel'd on the sod, and they cried to their God,
And their solemn hymns fill'd the air.

“ Mine arms, mine arms !” Duke William cried,
When he saw the first glimpse of dawn ;
“ Each moment is lost till my steed I bestride —
Sound ye the battle-horn.”

He buckled his cuirass blue and sheen,
And he brandish'd his sword so bright ;
In helmet and plume was there never seen
A fairer or statelier knight.

Proudly he strode from his milk-white tent,
And high on his steed did spring ;
Each man that saw him as he went
Said, “ Yonder rides a king !”

The battle was long, the battle was fierce,—
It is an awful sight
When keen swords strike, and when swift darts pierce,
From morn till dewy night.

Full many a gallant knight was slain,
And many a joyous steed ;
And blood was pour'd like summer rain
Or the last eve's flowing mead.

The Saxons turn'd, the Saxons fled—
How could they choose but yield,
When they saw Earl Harold lying dead
Beside his useless shield ?

Now is Duke William England's king,
That great and mighty chief;
The Normans are blithe as the merry spring,
But mute is the Saxon's grief.

Good news, good news to Normandie,
Where the fair Matilda mourns;
'Twas a duke who left her to cross the sea,
But 'tis a king returns.

They rear'd an abbey where Harold fell,
A stately pile and fair;
Through its still, grey walls the solemn bell
Oft summon'd to praise and prayer.

It is standing yet—a monument
Whose old and crumbling wall
To the gazer's eye is eloquent
Of Harold's fame and fall.

Reign of William Rufus, 1087-1100.

The New Forest.

THERE moves a sad procession
Across the silent vale,
With backward-glancing eyes of grief,
And tearful cheeks all pale.
Scatter'd and slow, without array,
With wavering feet they go,
Yet with a kind of solemn pace—
The measured tread of woe.

There women pause and tremble,
And weep with breaking heart ;
While men, with deeply knitted brows,
Stride mutely on apart.
There infants cling upon the breast,
Their own accustom'd place ;
And children gaze up askingly
Into each darken'd face.

For the king has sent his soldiers,
Who strike and pity not :
They have razed to the earth each smiling home—
They have burn'd each lowly cot.
It was the ruthless Conqueror
By whom this deed was done ;
And yet more fierce and hard of heart
Was Rufus, his stern son.

So they leave each humble cottage,
Where they so long have dwelt,
Where morn and eve to simple prayer,
With thankful hearts, they knelt—
Places all brighten'd with the joy
Of sweet domestic years,
And spots made holy by the flow
Of unforgotten tears.

And the gardens are uprooted,
And the walls cast down around ;
It is all a spacious wilderness—
The king's great hunting-ground !
While hopeless, homeless, shelterless,
Those exiles wander on ;
And most of them lie down to die,
Ere many days are gone.

O Forest ! green New Forest !
Home of the bird and breeze,
With all thy soft and sweeping glades,
And long dim aisles of trees ;
Like some ancestral palace,
Thou standest proud and fair,
Yet is each tree a monument
To Death and lone Despair !

And thou, relentless tyrant,
Ride forth and chase the deer,
With a heart that never melted yet
To pity or to fear.
But for all these broken spirits,
And for all these wasted homes,

God will avenge the fatherless—
The day of reckoning comes !

To hunt rode fierce King Rufus,
Upon a holy morn—
The Church had summon'd him to pray,
But he held the Church in scorn.
Sir Walter Tyrrel rode with him,
And drew his good bow-string ;
He drew the string to smite a deer,
But his arrow smote the king !

Down from his startled charger
The death-struck monarch falls ;
Sir Walter fled afar for fear,
And turn'd not at his calls.
On the spot where his strong hand had made
So many desolate
He died with none to pity him—
Such was the tyrant's fate !

None mourn'd for cruel Rufus :
With pomp they buried him ;
But no heart grieved beside his bier—
No kindly eye grew dim ;
But poor men lifted up their heads,
And clasp'd their hands, and said,
“ Thank God, the ruthless Conqueror
And his stern son are dead ! ”

Remember, oh, remember,
Ye who shudder at my lay,
These cruel men were children once,
As ye are now were they :

They sported round a mother's seat,
They pray'd beside her knee ;
She gazed into their cloudless eyes,
And ask'd, " What will they be ?"

Alas ! unhappy mothers,
If ye could then have known
How crime would make each soft young heart
As cold and hard as stone,
Ye would have wish'd them in their graves
Ere life had pass'd its spring.
Ah, friends, keep watch upon your hearts—
Sin is a fearful thing.

Reign of Henry I., 1100-1135.

The Knighting of Count Geoffrey of Anjou.

OH, listen, ye dames and ye lordlings all ;
For never before or since
Was there known so stately a festival
As that which at Rouen did befall
At the knighting of a prince.

Count Geoffrey of Anjou was his name,
And the race of our noblest kings—
The great Plantagenets, whose fame
Old England should ever be proud to claim—
From this gallant warrior springs.

That name Count Geoffrey did first assume
When, riding to the chase,
He wore in his casque, instead of plume,
A nodding crest of the yellow broom,
In its fresh and fragrant grace.

The train it is moving with stately march
Through the abbey's magnificent gate ;
The lances are group'd beneath corbel and arch,
Like a forest fair of the slender larch,
So airy, and tall, and straight.

The bishop walk'd first in his mitre and gown,—
A reverend prelate was he,
With his bare silver tresses in place of a crown ;
Next came great King Henry of learned renown,
From England beyond the sea.

There were heroes and chieftains undaunted in war,—
 In peace gentle, generous, and true ;
 With a step like a monarch, a glance like a star,
 Came the Empress Matilda from Germany far,—
 The betroth'd of the Count of Anjou.

As they paced up the aisle to the organ's slow strain,
 Like unrolling a blazonied page,
 The walls of the grey abbey echo'd again,
 And its outspreading arches seem'd blessing the train
 With the muteness and fervour of age.

The high mass is over, the aspirant kneels
 At the feet of King Henry the wise ;
 What strength and what hope in his spirit he feels,
 As the vow of his knighthood he solemnly seals
 With his lips, and his heart, and his eyes !

The monarch he lifted a Damascene blade
 O'er the kneeling count's brow on high ;
 A blow on his shoulder full gently he laid,
 And by that little action a knight he is made,
 Baptised into chivalry !

“ Bear thou this blow,” said the king to the knight,
 “ But never bear blow again ;
 For thy sword is to keep thine honour white,
 And thine honour must keep thy good sword bright,
 And both must be free from stain.

Thou takest a pledge upon thee now
 To be loyal, and true, and brave,
 Ever to succour the weak and low,
 And to make the fierce oppressor bow,
 And the helpless to aid and save.

Firm to thy God and thine honour's laws,
Remember this solemn word,
That the knight who ever his good sword draws
Save in a fair and a righteous cause
Is worthy to lose that sword.

Two cuisses of steel I give to thee,
Proof against blade and dart ;
Even so thy virtue proof should be
'Gainst the strokes of that ghostly enemy
Who wars upon the heart.

I give thee two spurs of gold so bright—
They are badges of chivalry ;
Thou must use them as becomes a knight,
Still to press onward in the fight,
And never to turn and flee.

I give thee a glorious steed from Spain—
A steed with a martial voice ;¹
As his docile neck obeys the rein,
So shouldst thou bend beneath the chain
Of the lady of thy choice.

I give thee a helm with a dancing crest ;
And like that airy plume,
The heart that beats thy steely vest
Should ever be lightsome in thy breast,
Unshadow'd by fortune's gloom.

Rise up a knight !'' With a joyous spring
Count Geoffrey leap'd on high ;

¹ " He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha ; and he smelleth the battle afar off."—*Job xxxix.* 25.

His sword he clasp'd like a living thing,—
“ For God, my lady, and my king !
Be this my battle-cry.”

Matilda's hand hath buckled his spurs—
A happy heart was his ;
And surely a happy task was hers,
For blest is the bride who ministers
To her husband's fame and bliss.

Lightly he sprang on his best of steeds,
Which stood at the abbey-door ;
In his flashing eye each gazer reads
A promise bright of valorous deeds,
As he gallops fair Rouen o'er.

Blithely he rides in the people's sight,
While the joyous heralds cry,
“ God's blessing on Geoffrey the new-made knight—
Long may he live, and well may he fight,
And nobly at last may he die !”

Reign of Stephen, 1135-1154.

*The Escape of the Empress Matilda.*¹

THROUGH changeful clouds of night
The winter moon was gliding,
Like a bird with wings of light
On the buoyant breezes riding;
Fair was the scene, and strangely wild,
Beneath her meek transparent ray;
For the snow, in glittering masses piled,
Gave back a light that mock'd the day.

It lay in shining heaps,
Like pearls of purest brightness;
It clothed the woods and steeps
In robes of bridal whiteness;
And high its crystal ramparts rose
Along old Thames's alter'd shore;
With one wide field of foam-like snows
The mighty stream was frozen o'er.

There Oxford Castle frown'd,
'Neath silken banners streaming,
With rebel spears around,
Between the snow-cliffs gleaming.
The haughty empress weeps within—
Tears from a heart that scorns to stoop—

¹ The escape of Matilda took place as narrated in the ballad; but the maiden who is there supposed to suggest the scheme is an imaginary personage.

And the pains of famine now begin
To prey upon her loyal troop.

Full sadly spake the bands
Of yielding on the morrow ;
Then wrung the queen her hands,
Crying, in wrathful sorrow,
“ Ah, Gloucester ! ah, my brother dear !
Thou truest and thou best of men !
'Twould not be thus if thou wert here—
Right soon should I be rescued then !”

Down gazed those valiant lords,
Their grief and shame were bitter ;
Alas, ungrateful words !
Thy tears, O queen, were fitter ;
For true of heart and strong of hand,
Each warrior fenced thee with his life ;
But when stern Famine bares her brand,
Man can but perish in the strife !

Out spake a maiden then :
“ Counsel my lady needeth ;
When fails the wit of men,
Oft woman's wit succeedeth.
At Wallingford, Earl Robert bides,
To guard thy son, thine England's heir :
Can we not cross the frozen tides,
To seek for aid and safety there ?”

“ Not so, alas ! not so !
Long is the way, and dreary ;
How shall we pass the foe—
We, faint, and worn, and weary ?”

“Doubt nothing,” said that damsel bold ;

“But only trust thyself to me,

And thou shalt learn how fearless-soul’d

An English maiden dares to be !”

“Farewell, ye noble hearts ;

God take you to his keeping !

Behold, your queen departs

From friends so loyal, weeping !”

Matilda donned a milk-white vest ;

And that same damsel, fair and true,

In robes of stainless white was dress’d,

Like the cold snow’s unspotted hue.

With linkèd cords they bound

The empress and her maiden ;

O cords, be strong and sound,

For dearly are ye laden !

They lighted noiselessly and fair

Upon the river’s glassy bed ;

The silence of the midnight air

Received no echo from their tread.

They fled, like startled deer

From the eager huntsman trooping,

Beneath the ice-hills clear

Full oft for shelter stooping.

The watchmen gazed adown the stream,

As they paced around the rebel-camp :

“See how the flying snow-flakes gleam

Under the moon’s resplendent lamp.”

Six weary miles they fled,

With fear and weakness striving,

Their cheeks as white with dread
 As the snows against them driving.
 They paused awhile at Abington,
 While steeds were brought of fleetest power ;
 To Wallingford they hurried on,
 And reach'd it ere the dawn's first hour.

Her steed the empress check'd,
 Scarce could her limbs sustain her ;
 Little of that she reck'd,
 Nought now hath power to pain her.
 Widely Earl Robert flings the gates,
 His sister and his queen to greet ;
 He leads her where prince Henry waits,
 And ah, their first embrace was sweet !

Matilda wept apart,
 Gentle and calm her weeping,
 Softening her haughty heart,
 Like dew the hard earth steeping.
 Her young son in her arms she press'd :
 "With thee," she cried, "thou child most dear,
 And with my brother's generous breast
 To shield me, there is nought I fear.

Let honour due and fair
 To this my maid be given ;
 Bless we with praise and prayer
 The pitying God of heaven ;
 His hand hath saved me from my foes,
 His hand shall still my friends sustain ;
 Thanks be to God ! I am with those
 Who are my heart's beloved again !'

The English Merchant and the Saracen Lady.

LAY THE FIRST.

It was a merchant, a merchant of fame,
And he sail'd to the Holy Land ;
Gilbert à Becket was his name ;
And he went to trade with the Syrians rich
For velvets, and satins, and jewels, which
He might sell on the western strand.

But the luckless merchant was captive ta'en
By a Turcoman fierce and rude ;
They bound his limbs with a galling chain,
And they set him to labour, early and late,
In the gardens which lay round the palace-gate
Of the terrible chief Mahmoud.

It was there he met with a Saracen maid
Of virtue and beauty rare :
And, behold, our merchant forgot his trade ;
His English habits aside he flung,
And he learn'd to speak with a Saracen tongue,
For the sake of that damsel fair.

He taught Zarina the Christian's lore ;
And the hours sped swiftly by,
When together they trod the lonely shore,
And she listen'd to him with a willing ear,
And he gazed in her eyes so deep and clear,
By the light of the morning sky.

They plighted their faith, and they vow'd to wed,

If Gilbert should e'er be free ;

How could she doubt a word he said ?

For her heart was trustful, pure, and mild,

Like the heart of a young unfearing child,

And she loved him hopefully.

But days stole on, and months stole on,

And Gilbert was captive yet ;

A long, long year had come and gone,

When the maiden wander'd with earnest eye

To the shadowy walk 'neath the palm-trees high,

Where oft before they met.

“ I am a Christian, my Gilbert, now,”

The Saracen lady said ;

The tone of her voice was sweet and low,

Like the voice of the night-breeze, cool and calm,

When it sighs through the leaves of the murmuring palm,

Of its own light sounds afraid.

“ At eve and at morn to thy God I pray ;

Oh, why should I linger here ?

Let us flee to thine England, far away ;

The God we serve shall guide our bark

Over the desert of waters dark ;

For how can a Christian fear ?

I will send to thee at the hour of eve,

When the curtains are drawn o'er heaven ;

And I shall not weep for the friends I leave,

For I am an orphan, and ne'er have known

A gentle word or a kindly tone,

Save such as thou hast given.

My gems shall purchase a gallant boat,
And a crew of skilful men :
Oh, when on the fetterless waves we float,
With the wide blue sky and the wide blue sea
Stretching around us triumphantly,
Wilt thou not bless me then ?”

He kiss'd her hand, and he vow'd to come ;
And the night was calm and fair :
Oh, how the captive thought on home,
As he gazed the dashing waters o'er,
And noiselessly paced the rugged shore ;
But Zarina was not there !

He look'd to the east, he look'd to the west,
But her form he could not see ;
And fear struck cold upon his breast,
For he almost fancied the stars so pale
Had watch'd their meeting, and told their tale
To some ruthless enemy.

He look'd to the south, he look'd to the north,
A light, light step he hears !
And a figure steps from the shadows forth—
But, alas for Zarina, it is not she !
It is but her faithful nurse Safiè,
And her eyes are dim with tears.

“ Oh, listen,” she cried, in bitter woe,
“ Zarina is captive made !
Sir Christian, Sir Christian, alone must thou go ;
Thy way is still clear ; but they know that she
Was wont to wander at eve with thee,
By treacherous lips betray'd.

She bids thee flee to thine own fair land,
For thou canst not aid her here."

The old nurse pointed with her hand.

Gilbert à Becket he grieved and sigh'd ;

But he saw the bark on the white waves ride,
And he thought on England dear.

" Adieu, my lady," at last he said,
While the nurse in silence wept ;

" Oh, I ne'er will forget my Saracen maid,
But I'll gather an army, firm and brave,
And come to seek thee across the wave!"

He spake, and on board he leapt.

Away flies the bark o'er the billowy foam,

As though her sails were wings—

She seems to know she is travelling home ;

And at last good Gilbert à Becket stands

On the noblest land of all earthly lands—

Oh, how his glad heart springs !

LAY THE SECOND.

Where is Zarina ? A captive lone

She sits, with tearful eye ;

Till two long years are come and gone,

And at last, when her ruthless gaolers slept,

One eve of beauty, forth she crept

To gaze from the lattice high.

The wall was steep, yet she dared to leap—
Safe on the turf doth she stand!
'Tis pleasant to be on the green earth free;
Yet where shall the hapless maiden go,
For the English tongue she doth not know,
Though she seeks the English land?

She hath wander'd down to the shore, and there
Is a bark about to sail,
With tapering masts that seem'd to bear,
Upon their crests so slight and high,
The outspread curtains of the sky,
Hung o'er with star-lamps pale.

Oft hath the maiden her lover heard,
When he spake of his far-off home;
Back to her lip returns the word,
And "London! London!" in haste she cries,
With a piteous tone and with streaming eyes,
While the seamen around her come.

"It is sad and strange," said the sailors then,
"That the damsel weepeth thus;
But oh, let it never be said that men
Look'd on a woman in sore distress,
And gave no aid to her feebleness!—
The maiden shall sail with us!"

So they took her in; and Zarina smiled,
And thank'd them with her eyes;
Gentle she was as a chidden child;
But the mariners could not understand
The wondrous words of the eastern land,
So they sail'd in silent wise.

They came to shore at fair Stamboul,
And the maiden roam'd all night
Through its streets, so calm, and still, and cool ;
And to every passer-by that came
She murmur'd forth the one dear name,
Clasping her hands so white.

Some turn'd aside with careless pride,
And some with angry frown ;
With a curious ear some turn'd to hear ;
But the word she spake each passer knew,
For London is known the wide world through,
From England's fair renown.

From place to place did the maiden stray,
And still that little word
Was her only guide on her venturous way.
Full many a pitying stranger gave
Aid to her journey by land and wave,
When her low sweet voice was heard.

And oft at eve would Zarina stand
On the edge of the darkening flood,
And sing the lays of her own far land :
So sweet was her voice when she sang of home,
That the listening peasants would round her come,
Proffering their simple food.

Thus when full many a month had pass'd
Of wearisome wanderings long,
To the wish'd-for place she was borne at last ;
And the maiden gaz'd with bewilder'd eye
On each spreading roof and turret high,
Mid London's hurrying throng.

Through all that maze of square and street

With pleading looks she went ;

And still her weary voice was sweet.

But now was " Gilbert " the name she cried :

The world of London is very wide,

And they knew not whom she meant.

Gilbert !—her lover's name—how oft

Had she breath'd that sound before !

Her eye grew bright, her tone grew soft ;

For she thought that life and hope must dwell

In the precious name she loved so well ;

And her troubles all seem'd o'er.

Now Gilbert à Becket was dwelling there,

Like a merchant-prince was he ;

His gardens were wide, and his halls were fair ;

His servants flatter'd, his minstrels play'd ;—

He had almost forgotten his Saracen maid,

And their parting beyond the sea.

But word was brought, as he sate at meat,

Of a damsel fair and sad,

Who wander'd for ever through square and street,

With claspèd hands and strength o'erspent,

Murmuring, " Gilbert !" as she went,

Like one possess'd, or mad.

Gilbert à Becket, he straightway rose,

For his conscience prick'd him sore ;

Forth from his splendid hall he goes—

A well-known voice is in his ears,

And he sees a fair face veil'd in tears,

And he thinks on the Syrian shore.

Forth to Zarina in haste he came,
Oh, how could he ever forget?
“ Gilbert !” she cries—’tis the selfsame name,
But, ah ! what a changed and joyous tone,
For the maiden’s heart is no more alone,
And the lovers at last are met !

He took that happy wanderer home,
He placed her at his side ;
O’er desert plain, and o’er ocean’s foam,
She hath come, with her changeless love and faith ;
And now there is nothing can part, save death,
The bridegroom and the bride !

The maiden was led to the holy font,
They named her “ Matilda” there ;
Yet ever was Gilbert à Becket wont,
In his joyous home, with a sweet wife blest,
To say that he loved Zarina best,
His Saracen true and fair.

Their first-born son was a priest of power,
Who ruled on English ground—
His fame remaineth to this hour !
God send to every valiant knight
A lady as true, and a home as bright,
As Gilbert the merchant found !

Reign of Henry II., 1154-1189.

Earl Strongbow.

EARL STRONGBOW lies in Dublin towers,
Begirt by a mighty host ;
At the horn's wild sound they have gather'd around
From forest, hill, and coast.
There are thirty thousand island men,
With spears, and bows, and darts ;
Earl Strongbow has not one to ten—
Six hundred gallant hearts !

Six hundred gallant hearts had he,
And not a blade beside ;
But these did battle valorously
For Strongbow and his bride.
Fair Eva wept, fair Eva pray'd,
And wrung her hands of snow ;—
Alas ! her tears are little aid
Against the ruthless foe !

The brave earl sate at his castle-board
At the close of a summer's day ;
Freely the generous wine was pour'd
As they feasted the eve away ;
He gazed on the manly brows around—
Cried he, “ We may yet hold out,
For our walls so strong will shield us long,
And our hearts are full as stout !”

They answer'd his words by a ringing cheer,
And Milo de Cogan spoke ;
“ We lack but bold Fitzstephen here,
With his hand and heart of oak ;
In Carrig fair, Fitzstephen rests ;
But knew he of our need,
Soon should we see his courser free
Come leaping o'er the mead.”

As he spake, a page came up the hall,
Like a ghost of the drown'd his seeming ;
Pale was his face and feeble his pace,
And his vest all drench'd and streaming.
“ Lord baron,” he cried, “ unseen did I glide
Through the midst of yon mighty foe,
Thy moat did I swim, as the twilight sank dim,
And I bear thee news of woe !

Be sad, be sad ! thou hast look'd thy last
On the bold Fitzstephen's brow ;
His knightly limbs ere morn be past
Shall feed the hooded crow.
Beset by a force of fearful strength,
By want and famine worn,
His gallant heart gives way at length,
And he must yield ere morn.

He sends thee this glove of steel by me ;
And he bade me pray ye all
To give a mass to his memory,
And a sigh to grace his fall.”
Sadly the token Earl Strongbow took,
While sorrow, shame, and ire

Strove for a while in his downcast look ;
But anon his eyes shot fire !

“ Answer me, friends,” he cried ; “ if thus
Our danger and need were known,
Would not Fitzstephen die for us ?
And now, shall he fall alone ?”
Up leap’d they all at those stirring words,
And they shook the ancient hall
With the angry clash of their outdrawn swords,
And their shouts, “ We are ready all !”

Ready were all—ah, noble few,
Ready ye were to die !
That heart is chill which feels no thrill
At your fidelity !
One swift embrace exchanging then,
Like friends who part ere death,
They rush on the foe, as the mountain-piled snow
Rushes down on the plains beneath !

Ah, knew’st thou, Eva, good and fair,
Kneeling with lifted hands,
How he whose name thou breath’st in prayer
By death beleaguer’d stands,
Paler would grow thy cheeks’ soft glow,
Sadder thine eyes’ soft light,
But prouder still thy trembling heart,
To be wife to *such* a knight !

Come forth, come forth from thy lonely bower,
A messenger rides below ;
“ Oh, bring’st thou news from Dublin’s tower ?
Speak, is it weal or woe ?”

“ Joy, lady, joy—these wond’ring eyes
Have look’d on deeds of fame ;
Joy—for the earth, the sea, the skies,
Ring with Earl Pembroke’s name !

That tiny band, I saw it dash
Through the enemy’s gather’d crowd,
It was like the slender lightning’s flash
Cleaving the massy cloud.
Clear shot they through—on either hand
Their foes nor fight nor fly,
But stand, as trembling sheep might stand
When a lion hath darted by !

And when they came to Carrig fair,
Trembling their eyes beheld
Its lonely banners rock the air,
Its heights unsentinell’d ;
Its troops, a sad and downcast host,
Slow moving to the gate,
Leaving their leader at his post,
Death’s welcome stroke to wait !

‘ To the rescue, ho !’ they charge the foe
With a torrent’s headlong might ;
With answering shout the troops rush out
And join that desperate fight.
Oh, who shall say what Fitzstephen felt
When, from his tower on high,
He saw the light of their lances bright
Gleaming against the sky ?

Oh, who shall say what Fitzstephen felt
When the glorious fight was done,

And his friend he prest to his fervent breast,
As a mother clasps her son !”
Fair Eva kneel'd on the flowery mead,
But never a word she spoke ;
When hark ! the tramp of a coming steed
That joyful silence broke.

In glistening steel, with armèd heel,
And tall plume stooping low,
With pennon fair, that woos the air,
A warrior nears them now ;
His step is light, and his smile is bright,
As he flings down his charger's rein :
Oh ! this is Pembroke's graceful knight—
He is come to his own again !

“ Now, welcome home, mine honour'd lord !
Proud should old England be
To learn from thy resistless sword
Pure faith and chivalry !
Oh, I have wept from sun to sun,
A sad and widow'd wife ;
But I would not wish thy deed undone,
Though it had cost thy life !”

Reign of Richard the First, 1189-1199.

The Captivity of Coeur de Lion.

IN FIVE LAYS.

LAY THE FIRST.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE KING.

In the realm of sunny Palestine,
 Realm of the rose, the palm, the vine,
 The warrior-king hath fought ;
 And the valour of his strong right hand
 Free passage through that hallow'd land
 For Christian men hath wrought.

Now may the pilgrim fearless tread
 The spot that held his Saviour dead,
 And fearless kneel to pay
 His vows before that sacred shrine,
 In the land of sunny Palestine,
 Where Christians love to pray.

And the warrior-king hath won him fame,
 A mighty and a glorious name
 Is his, the wide world through ;
 For his deeds on that far eastern shore,
 Done in a righteous cause, seem more
 Than man alone might do.

A generous knight he was, who strove
For fame, and piety, and love,
Not for base earthly gain :
He saw his comrades share the spoil
Won by his valour and his toil,
With careless, calm disdain.

Enough it was for him to feel
That for his God he drew his steel,
And for his faith was bold ;
And he thought one smile so gently bright,
Given by his lady to her knight,
Was worth a world of gold.

And he knew that he should leave behind
The legacy to all mankind
Of an undying name ;
A name to thrill the brave, and make
The very coward's heart awake
To not ignoble shame.

And now, his toils and dangers o'er,
Joyous he quits that eastern shore ;
Oh, let him journey fast !
For his eager heart with hope doth beat,
He pants once more to set his feet
On England's soil at last.

Yet are there foes upon his way
To strike, beleaguer, and waylay ;—
The promise-breaking Greek,
The lord of France's lovely land,
And Austria's duke, as strong of hand
As he of wit is weak.

In a Templar's garb the king is drest,
The white cross gleams upon his breast :

Safe in this strange disguise
He hopes to join his lady dear,
And read his welcome in the tear
That bathes her gentle eyes.

Look forth, look forth from England's shore !
Look forth, look forth, the far seas o'er !

When will his swift bark come ?
Oh, swift and sure the bark should be
Which bears across the willing sea
Our wanderer to his home !

Take up, take up the strain of grief !
Lost is our warrior and our chief !

Foes lurk'd upon his path.
Nor close disguise, nor linkèd mail,
Nor faith, nor chivalry avail
To save him from their wrath.

Captive he is ; but to what foe,
Alas, his English do not know !

A dark and sunless gloom
Hath closed above that noble head,
As closeth o'er the newly dead
The cold and changeless tomb !

LAY THE SECOND.

THE COMPLAINT OF CŒUR DE LION IN HIS CAPTIVITY.

I was a king of fearless might,
I was a warrior and a knight,
My soul was like the morning light,
 So sparkling in its buoyancy !

I am a captive sad and lone,
And all my glorious things are gone,
Except the heart that is mine own,
 Unchanging in its royalty !

The sword that I was wont to wield,
The dancing plume, the knightly shield,
The clarion calling to the field,
 Are lost to my captivity !

The crown that I was wont to wear,
The robe of pride, the sceptre fair,—
These are not mine, though mine they were,—
 Gone are the signs of majesty !

Oh, that I were a simple hind,
Slavish in toil, and weak in mind,
So I might feel the morning wind
 Sweep o'er my forehead joyously !

Oh, that I were a village maid,
To weeping prone, of wars afraid,
So I might tread the mossy glade,
 Unthinking and at liberty !

The rills along my native plains
 Are murmuring forth their gladsome strains ;
 And the gay breeze that scorneth chains
 Is blowing fresh and wantonly !

The birds that skim my native air
 Are pouring forth sweet music there ;
 The woods are green, the hills are fair,
 While I am in captivity !

My strength is worn, my spirits sink,
 My heart does every thing but shrink ;
 Alas, my people, do ye think
 Upon your king regretfully ?

My queen,¹ my wife, my lady ! thou
 Of the blue eye and dazzling brow,
 Say, art thou weeping for me now,
 In sad and patient constancy ?

Do ye remember me ? Oh, fast
 The weary months are gliding past :
 Will they bring liberty at last ?
 Or have ye all forgotten me ?

Ah, friends ! if ye were thus distress'd,
 Thus chain'd, insulted, and oppress'd,
 Ye would not find this faithful breast
 So careless of your memory !

Ah, lady ! did a tear but steep
 Those moonlight eyes, so still and deep,

¹ Berengaria of Navarre, a princess of great beauty and gentleness.

Here is a heart, ere thou shouldst weep,
That would rejoice to die for thee!

Hard is the lesson I must learn,
How changeless faith meets false return;
The love I give I cannot earn
As strong in its fidelity!

My God, for Thee my sword I drew;
Thy foes my strong arm overthrew;
Oh, do not Thou forget me too;
Give aid in mine extremity!

Upon Thy love my heart shall lean
Even in my dungeon's gloomy scene;
Forgotten by my friends and queen,
In Thee I find sufficiency!

LAY THE THIRD.

THE LAMENT OF THE ENGLISH FOR THE CAPTIVITY OF CŒUR DE LION.

We have lost our hero-monarch, our lion-king is ta'en,
Around his free and knightly limbs is bound the shameful chain;
The eye which used to marshal us is waxing faint and dim,
For the light of day, which shines on us, is shut and barr'd from
him.

Alas, alas, for England! our princely chief is lost;
And powerless is the mighty arm that hath struck down a host;
Our people hath no ruler, no tenant hath our throne;
And we know not where the enemy hath laid our glorious one.

We have follow'd him to battle in the far-off eastern climes ;
 We have watch'd his matchless valour a thousand, thousand
 times ;

We have seen the humbled Saracen kneel low to kiss his robe ;
 For his fame hath but one limit—the limit of the globe !

For his coronal of glory he won the brightest gem
 Where the stately palms are circling thy land, Jerusalem !
 The very air that fans thy domes is vocal with his name,
 And the pale cheek of each infidel pays tribute to his fame.

His eye was like the lightning, his arm was like its stroke,
 When it shivers into shapeless dust the gnarl'd and massy
 oak ;

His voice was like a trumpet with a challenge in its tone,
 Yet sweet as the wild lark that sings in field and forest lone.

But now there is a fetter on that firm and noble hand,
 And mute is that imperial voice whose accent was command ;
 That eye of bright authority is waxing faint and dim,
 For the beams of day, the breath of morn—all, all are barr'd
 from him !

Oh, is it wily Philip who hath wrought thee this mischance,
 Because thine English banner did outstrip the flag of France ?
 Or is it specious Burgundy, that soft and carpet-knight,
 Because thy foot hath ever been before him in the fight ?

Or is it craven Austria, who plann'd the false surprise,
 In vengeance for the lofty scorn of thine undaunted eyes ?
 Well hath thy soul disdain'd him, and well thine eye hath
 spurn'd

The cunning envy of the base, which in his spirit burn'd.

Out on thee, recreant Austria! in battle thou wouldst be
 Full glad to sue for mercy to the Lion on thy knee;
 Thou art not meet to serve him as a squire or as a slave;
 Alas, that craft and dastardy prevail against the brave!

We have sheath'd our useless weapons, we have flung our hel-
 mets down,
 Our steeds are uncaparison'd, our clarions are unblown;
 Why should the joyous clarion sound, to cheer us on the foe?
 Thou art not here to marshal us, so wherefore should we go?

All powerless are thy warriors—they know not where thou
 art;
 They can but lock thy bitter wrongs within each burning
 heart;
 For thee the minstrel only his lay of mourning sings,
 Thou monarch of all heroes! thou hero among kings!

LAY THE FOURTH.

BLONDEL AND CŒUR DE LION.

A minstrel cross'd the summer sea,
 With haste that never tarried;
 A sword upon his thigh had he,
 And a golden lute he carried.

He wander'd east, he wander'd west,
 The way was long and dreary;
 But the minstrel never paused to rest,
 Though faint he grew, and weary.

On, on he went, by night, by noon,
His eager steps renewing,
On, when the calm and peaceful moon
To sweet repose was wooing.

Where'er a castle to the skies
Its haughty front was raising,
The minstrel paused with anxious eyes,
As though his heart were gazing.

He paced the battled walls around,
Beneath fair banners flying ;
He struck his lute of silver sound,
And seem'd to wait replying.

He sang a wild, unfinish'd lay ;
Then paused, his sad head shaking,
He turn'd and went upon his way,
As though his heart were breaking.

Who is the minstrel ? late and long
He roams, to no man speaking ;
'Tis Blondel, 'tis the prince of song,
His captive master seeking !

Lo, to a lonely tower and grey
Once more the bard advances ;
Once more his eyes the wall survey
With sad and asking glances.

Hark to his strain ! how changed and low
Upon the ear 'tis stealing ;
Its notes give language to the woe
Which his sad heart is feeling.

Oft hath he waked that strain before,
By dames and lords surrounded,
When Richard, skill'd in minstrel lore,
His lute, in answer, sounded.

Each courtier-critic smooth'd his brow
When that voice and lute were blended ;
Ah, if those lov'd sounds answer now,
His minstrel's search is ended !

Blondel's Song.

Two brothers once did weeping part
On the edge of the sea so blue ;
The one was fair and false of heart,
The other was gallant and true.

The true knight sail'd to a distant strand
For the holy cross to fight ;
The false knight seized his wealth and land,
And revell'd from morn till night.

Like a prince he sate in his hall of state,
And his vassals came at his word,
Their homage they paid and their suits they made
As though he had been their lord.

There came a stranger into the hall,
And spake, on bended knee,
“ Sir baron, art thou the lord of all
The lands that around I see ? ”

The minstrel paused ; but hark ! but hark !
Is it the wild wind sighing ?
'Tis a voice of power from the old grey tower
To the minstrel's voice replying !

[*Blondel's song continued.*]

“ I *am* their lord,” the false knight cried,
With a glance of scorn and a smile of pride—
Pride in his own disgrace.
His head the stranger slowly raised—
It was a brother's eye that gazed
Upon the traitor's face.

Loud rose the vassals' joyous shout,
While the craven lord, in fear and doubt,
Down from his throne did come.
“ Oh ! is it thus,” his brother cried,
Opening his arms of pardon wide,
“ Thou giv'st me welcome home ?”

“ Ah, what revenge can ever be
So sweet as pardon full and free ?”
No more ! Though strong and clear
The king's voice sounded on the blast,
His minstrel's tears broke forth so fast
That the words he could not hear !

“ He is found ! he is found !” the minstrel cries,
With a faltering voice, and with streaming eyes ;
“ My hero ! my king ! I have found thee now,
Though I must not gaze on thy glorious brow.

That voice, that voice ! I have heard it oft,
When the banners waved in the skies aloft ;
And it rang through the air like a summons high,
Nerving the hearts of the brave to die !

God bless thee ! God cheer thee ! oh, sink thou not
Under the weight of thy woful lot !
I seek thine England, thine isle of the sea,
Thy home which hath never forgotten thee !

My voice to her farthest shores shall ring,
And tell the land of her captive king ;
And thy chains shall be broken, and thou shalt be
Again in the land of thy fathers, free !

Then let not the beauty of hope depart
Out of the depths of thy lion heart ;
Think on thy God in thy lonely cell !
His blessing be on thee ! my chief, farewell !”

Mute is the bard's exulting tone,
And the captive king is left alone ;
But past were grief, and fear, and gloom
Away from his narrow prison-room.

All joyous is the place, and bright
With his own heart's reflected light ;
Sweet tears are in his warrior eye,
For he thinks on faith and loyalty.

His queen is weeping for his lot ;
His English hearts forget him not :
And hope, and strength, and patience, now
Resume their throne upon his brow.

LAY THE FIFTH.

THE RETURN OF CŒUR DE LION.

Shout forth for joy, old England — our noble king is come !
 God bless thee, generous Richard, oh, welcome, welcome home !
 Long hast thou been a captive, and long thine isle hath mourn'd ;
 Long, long thy queen hath wept for thee, but now thou art
 return'd.

There's rejoicing in the palace, there is gladness in the cot ;
 There is no lip of prince, or peer, or serf, that smileth not ;
 For our hero is come back to us, our noble king is come :
 God bless thee, lion-hearted one ! oh, welcome, welcome home !

The queen look'd from her chamber, she look'd toward the sea,
 " Oh, where is now the gallant bark that brings my love to me ?"
 When she heard that bark was coming she donn'd her best
 array,

And she went in joyous eagerness to meet him by the way.
 Down to the shore she hurried, no word her haste might check,
 She cast herself into his arms, she wept upon his neck,
 Crying, " Hail to thee, mine only one ! thank God that thou
 art come !

My hero and my husband, oh, welcome, welcome home !"

Prince John beheld his brother : at first he thought to fly,
 For he knew he was a traitor, and he dared not meet that eye ;
 Yet he turn'd to sue for mercy, he kneel'd upon his knee,—
 " For Christ's dear sake, my brother, I pray you pardon me !"
 " I forgive thee," said the hero, with a glance of calm regret ;
 " Forget not thou my pardon, as I thy fault forget."
 God bless thee, thou forgiving one, for mercy art thou come ;
 Our generous-hearted hero, oh, welcome, welcome home !

Rejoice, rejoice, old England, exult from shore to shore !
 Thy hero is come back again, thy day of grief is o'er !
 Oh, base and cruel were the hands that bound him in a chain ;
 He hath shaken off those fetters, as the lion shakes his mane !
 He is come to those who love him,—our own, our noble king ;
 Our hearts unfold to hail him, like buds to hail the spring.
 Come forth, come forth to meet him ! thank God that he is come !
 Our free and fearless-hearted one, oh, welcome, welcome home !

Coeur de Lion and his Horse.

“ AH, Fanuel, my noble horse, and art thou, art thou slain?
Wilt thou never bear me to the chase or the battle-field again?
Thou wert a steed of peerless might, a steed of strength and glee;
Right faithful wert thou to thy lord, and well thy lord loved
thee.

Thou wouldst answer, when I named thee, with a joyous neigh
and proud,
For thy voice was like a cymbal's, so exulting and so loud;
Thou wouldst arch thy neck, and stamp thy foot, for joy when
I came near;
Thou wert eager to look lovely in the eyes of one so dear.

If other knight dared ride thee, with gay and reckless bound,
As a billow shakes the foam away, thou'dst toss him to the
ground:
Yet gentle wert thou in thy strength; my lady-love might dare
To twine her fingers in thy mane, as in a child's bright hair.

Thou didst not start nor tremble at the sound of clashing swords;
Thy spirit in the battle was as eager as thy lord's;
Like him, thy fittest place was where the closing lines engage,
When thou wouldst snort and shake thy mane, like a lion in
his rage.

A friend and a companion thou wert unto my heart;
Alas, alas, my noble steed, and is it thus we part?
Low on the ground, and lifeless, I see thy graceful head;
My voice awakes thee not,—by this, I know that thou art dead.

I must leave thee on the burning sands, beneath the eastern sun,
Like a worn and sleeping warrior whose battle-task is done ;
Yet thou shalt not be forgotten by thy master and thy friend ;
Where'er my name is known on earth, thy glory shall extend."

King Richard thus lamented for his steed when it was slain ;
But he turn'd him to the combat, and he drew his sword again ;
"Take back thy barb, good Longsword ;¹ mount, mount, and
 be thou mute ;
For I will not fight on horseback, if thou must fight a-foot."

But the mighty sultan Saladin had watch'd our gallant king,
How he bore him in the battle like an eagle on the wing ;
He saw his charger bleeding ; he saw the hero fight
On foot amid his followers, a fearless-hearted knight.

He bade a coal-black steed be brought, and to his page he spake,
"Lead this to yonder chieftain — bid him ride it for my sake :
Fair courtesy beseemeth the lofty in degree ;
And to honour such a hero, doth honour unto me."

The page he bow'd full lowly, that courser's rein he took,
And he led him where King Richard had kneel'd beside a brook ;
All heated with the battle, he had cast his helm aside,
And he stoop'd to bathe his forehead in the cold and glassy
 tide.

"O king, the mighty Saladin hath sent this steed to thee."
Thus spake the page full humbly, and dropp'd upon his knee :
King Richard smooth'd that charger's mane, and stroked his
 graceful head ;
"Go thank your courteous master," right graciously he said.

¹ William, Earl of Salisbury, surnamed Longsword.

“ Much shall I prize thee for his sake, my steed of glossy
black !”

With that he grasp'd the courser's mane, to leap upon his back :
But Longsword came to check him, that brave and loyal count ;

“ Nay, nay, my liege—your pardon—let me try him ere you
mount.”

“ Who doubts the noble sultan's faith ?” King Richard sternly
said ;

But the earl was in the saddle ere the answer well was made :
Oh, fair and knightly was his seat upon the gilded selle ;
And he prick'd the charger's side, resolved to try his mettle
well.

The Arab feels a stranger's spur, a stranger's hand he knows ;
Down to the dust right scornfully he bends his haughty brows ;
Then tossing up his wrathful head, he scour'd across the plain,
Like the wild bull of the jungle, in his fury and disdain.

Away, away, with frantic speed, across the flying sand,
He rushes like a torrent freed, uncheck'd by human hand ;
Nor did he stay his headlong race until his path had crost,
Like a flash of summer lightning, the Paynim's startled host.

He came to where the sultan stood, his ancient master dear,
And there he paused ; and sweet it was his joyous neigh to hear :
He laid his head right lovingly against the sultan's breast,
With wistful and expectant eyes that ask'd to be caress'd.

Oh, deeply blush'd brave Saladin ! he blush'd for noble shame,
Lest the stain of such a stratagem should light upon his fame ;
He bent full low his turban'd brow, and scarce his eyes could
lift,

As he craved of good Earl William a pardon for his gift.

“ Now grieve not, gallant sultan,” quoth the earl in earnest
tone ;

“ For the great heart of King Richard is noble as thine own :
No doubt is in his confidence ; as soon would he believe
That *he* could be dishonour'd, as that *thou* couldst thus deceive.”

Of joyous heart was Saladin that thus the earl should say ;
He bade his slaves caparison a steed of silver-grey ;
And with many a phrase of courtesy, and many a fair excuse,
He sent that docile charger for good King Richard's use.

To that steed, in fair remembrance of the sultan true and brave,
The stately name of Saladin our gallant monarch gave.
Thus to his foe each warrior-king was courteous as a brother ;
Oh, thus should generous enemies do honour to each other !

Reign of King John, 1199-1216.

The Lay of the fearless De Courcy.

THE fame of the fearless De Courcy
 Is boundless as the air ;
 With his own right hand he won the land
 Of Ulster, green and fair !
 But he lieth low in a dungeon now,
 Powerless, in proud despair ;
 For false King John hath cast him in,
 And closely chain'd him there.

The noble knight was weary
 At morn, and eve, and noon ;
 For chilly bright seem'd dawn's soft light,
 And icily shone the moon :
 No gleaming mail gave back the rays
 Of the dim unfriendly sky,
 And the proud free stars disdain'd to gaze
 Through his lattice, barr'd and high.

But when the trumpet-note of war
 Rang through his narrow room,
 Telling of banners streaming far,
 Of knight, and steed, and plume ;
 Of the wild *mêlée*, and the sabre's clash,
 How would his spirit bound !
 Yet ever after the lightning's flash
 Night closeth darker round.

Down would he sink on the floor again,
Like the pilgrim who sinks on some desert plain,
Even while his thirsting ear can trace
 The hum of distant streams ;
Or the maimèd hound, who hears the chase
 Sweep past him in his dreams.

The false king sate in his hall of state
 'Mid knights and nobles free ;
“ Who is there,” he cried, “ who will cross the tide,
 And do battle in France for me ?
There is cast on mine honour a fearful stain,
The death of the boy who ruled Bretagne ;¹
And the monarch of France, my bold suzerain,
Hath bidden a champion for me appear,
My fame from this darkening blot to clear.
Speak—is your silence the silence of fear,
My knights and my nobles ? Frowning and pale
Your faces grow as I tell my tale !
Is there not one of this knightly ring
Who dares do battle for his king ?”

The warriors they heard, but they spake not a word ;
 The earth some gazed upon,
And some did raise a stedfast gaze
 To the face of false King John.
Think ye they fear'd ? They were Englishmen all,
Though mutely they sate in their monarch's hall ;
The heroes of many a well-fought day,
Who loved the sound of a gathering fray,

¹ Prince Arthur of Brittany, whose melancholy fate has been too often the theme of song and story to require notice here.

Even as the lonely shepherd loves
The herds' soft bell in the mountain-groves.
Why were they silent? There was not one
Who could trust the word of false King John;
And their cheeks grew pallid as they thought
On the deed of blood by his base hand wrought;
Pale, with a brave heart's generous fear,
When forced a tale of shame to hear.

'Twas a coward whiteness then did chase
The glow of shame from the false king's face;
And he turn'd aside, in bootless pride,
That witness of his guilt to hide;
Yet every heart around him there
Witness against him more strongly bare!

Oh, out then spake the beauteous queen:¹

“A captive lord I know,
Whose loyal heart hath ever been
Eager to meet the foe;
Were true De Courcy here this day,
Freed from his galling chain,
Never, oh never, should scoffers say,
That amid all England's rank and might,
Their king had sought him a loyal knight,
And sought such knight in vain!”
Up started the monarch, and clear'd his brow,
And bade them summon De Courcy now.
Swiftly his messengers hastened away,
And sought the cell where the hero lay;

¹ Isabella of Angoulême, wife to King John, celebrated for her beauty and high spirit.

They bade him arise at his master's call,
And follow their steps to the stately hall.

He is brought before the council,—
There are chains upon his hands ;
With his silver hair, that aged knight,
Like a rock o'erhung with foam-wreaths white,
Proudly and calmly stands.

He gazes on the monarch
With a stern and starlike eye ;
And the company muse and marvel much,
That the light of the old man's eye is such,
After long captivity.

His fetters hang upon him
Like an unheeded thing ;
Or like a robe of purple, worn
With graceful and indifferent scorn
By some great-hearted king.

And strange it was to witness
How the false king look'd aside ;
For he dared not meet his captive's eye !
Thus ever the spirit's royalty
Is greater than pomp and pride !

The false king spake to his squires around,
And his lifted voice had an angry sound ;
“ Strike ye the chains from each knightly limb !
Who was so bold as to fetter him ?
Warrior, believe me, no hest of mine
Bade them fetter a form like thine ;
Thy sovereign knoweth thy fame too well.”
He paused, and a cloud on his dark brow fell ;

For the knight still gazed upon him,
 And his eye was like a star ;
 And the words on the lips of the false king died,
 Like the murmuring sounds of an ebbing tide
 By the traveller heard afar.

From the warrior's form they loosed the chain ;
 His face was lighted with calm disdain ;
 Nor cheek, nor lip, nor eye, gave token
 Even that he knew his chains were broken.
 He spake—no music, loud or clear,
 Was in the voice of the grey-hair'd knight ;
 But a low stern sound, like that ye hear
 In the march of a mail-clad host by night.
 " Brother of Cœur de Lion," said he,
 " These chains have not dishonour'd me !"
 There was crushing scorn in each simple word,
 Mightier than battle-axe or sword.

Not long did the heart of the false king thrill
 To the touch of passing shame,
 For it was hard, and mean, and chill ;
 As breezes sweep o'er a frozen rill,
 Leaving it cold and unbroken still,—
 That feeling went and came ;
 And now to the knight he made reply,
 Pleading his cause right craftily ;
 Skill'd was his tongue in specious use
 Of promise fair and of feign'd excuse,
 Blended with words of strong appeal
 To love of fame and to loyal zeal.
 At length he ceased ; and every eye
 Gazed on De Courcy wistfully.

“Speak!” cried the king in that fearful pause;
“Wilt thou not champion thy monarch’s cause?”

The old knight struck his foot on the ground,
Like a war-horse hearing the trumpet sound;
And he spake with a voice of thunder,
Solemn and fierce in tone,
Waving his hand to the stately band
Who stood by the monarch’s throne,
As a warrior might wave his flashing glaive
When cheering his squadrons on;
“I will fight for the honour of England,
Though not for false King John!”

He turn’d and strode from the lofty hall,
Nor seem’d to hear the sudden cheer
Which burst, as he spake, from the lips of all.
And when he stood in the air without,
He paused as if in joyful doubt;
To the forests green and the wide blue sky
Stretching his arms embracingly,
With stately tread and uplifted head,
As a good steed tosses back his mane
When they loose his neck from the servile rein;
Ye know not, ye who are always free,
How precious a thing is liberty!
“O world!” he cried; “sky, river, hill!
Ye wear the garments of beauty still;
How have ye kept your youth so fair,¹
While age has whiten’d this hoary hair?”

¹ The reader of German will here recognise an exquisite stanza from Uhland, very inadequately rendered.

But when the squire, who watch'd his lord,
Gave to his hand his ancient sword,
The hilt he press'd to his eager breast,
Like one who a long-lost friend hath met ;
And joyously said, as he kiss'd the blade,
“ Methinks there is youth in my spirit yet.
For France ! for France ! o'er the waters blue ;
False king, dear land, adieu, adieu ! ”

He hath cross'd the booming ocean,
On the shore he plants his lance ;
And he sends his daring challenge
Into the heart of France :
“ Lo, here I stand for England,
Queen of the silver main !
To guard her fame and to cleanse her name
From slander's darkening stain !
Advance, advance ! ye knights of France ;
Give answer to my call !
Lo, here I stand for England !
And I defy ye all ! ”

From the east and the north came champions forth—
They came in a knightly crowd ;
From the south and the west each generous breast
Throbb'd at that summons proud.
But though brave was each lord, and keen each sword,
No warrior could withstand
The strength of the hero-spirit
Which nerved that old man's hand.
He is conqueror in the battle ;
He hath won the wreath of bay ;

To the shining crown of his fair renown
He hath added another ray ;
He hath drawn his sword for England ;
He hath fought for her spotless name ;
And the isle resounds to her farthest bounds
With her grey-hair'd hero's fame,
In the ears of the craven monarch
Oft must this burthen ring,—
“ Though the crown be thine and the royal line,
He is in heart thy king !”

So they gave this graceful honour
To the bold De Courcy's race,
That they ever should dare their helms to wear
Before the king's own face :
And the sons of that line of heroes
To this day their right assume ;
For, when every head is unbonneted,¹
They walk in cap and plume !

¹ The present representative of the house of De Courcy is Lord Kinsale.

The Lament of Eleanor of Bretagne.

[Eleanor was so beautiful that she was called "The Pearl of Brittany." She was the sister of Prince Arthur; and after the murder of her brother she was imprisoned in Bristol Castle by the cruel and tyrannical John, where she died after a captivity of many years.]

COMFORT me, O my God !
 Mine only hope Thou art !
 The strokes of Thine afflicting rod
 Fall heavy on my heart.
 Oh, who would wish to live
 When life's bright flowers decay !
 Oh, had I power to give
 This weight of life away !
 Comfort me, O my God !

Thou didst Thyself endure
 Full many a bitter pang ;
 Thou, the All-holy, the All-pure,
 Upon the cross didst hang.
 My feet are on the track
 Trodden erewhile by Thine ; —
 Ah, do not cast me back
 On this weak heart of mine !
 Comfort me, O my God !

I will pour forth my woes
 Into Thy pitying ear.
 Stern, stern must be the hearts of those
 Whose hands confined me here ;
 In the morning of my days,
 In the spring of guiltless mirth,

Never again to gaze
Free on the gladsome earth !
Comfort me, O my God !

'Twas said that I was fair
As the white gem of the sea ;
They named me, in my native air,
The Pearl of Brittany :
At tourneys have I been,
And they chose me, far and near,
To reign the tourney's queen, —
I, the poor captive here.
Comfort me, O my God !

But I do not now regret
My splendour, doom'd to fade ;
My changing beauty I forget ;—
But oh, the wood's deep shade,
The free bird's gushing songs,
The sound of murmuring seas,—
For these my spirit longs,
And for dearer things than these.
Comfort me, O my God !

I had a brother then,
Whose place was in my heart ;—
Oh, give me my beloved again,
And freedom may depart !
How shall I breathe the tone
Of that name,—the lost — the dear ?
Arthur ! mine own, mine own !—
Alas, thou canst not hear !
Comfort me, O my God !

They murder'd him by night,
 In the sweetness of his youth,
 His brow all bright with boyhood's light,
 Clear as the beams of truth.
 Falaise, thy walls, Falaise,
 Behold a fearful thing,
 For his brother's child a brother slays,
 And a traitor stabs his king!
 Comfort me, O my God!

Yes, king thou shouldst have been
 Of this isle of high renown;
 But death's wide gulf is now between
 Thee and thy thorny crown.
 My brother! thou wert mine!
 Of crowns I little reck;
 But, oh, that I could twine
 These arms about thy neck.
 Comfort me, O my God!

Sleep on, sweet Arthur, sleep
 In thy calm and happy grave;
 How couldst thou bear to see me weep,
 And not have power to save?
 Farewell! And shall I waste
 My weary life away
 In weeping for the past?
 No! let me kneel and pray,
 Comfort me, O my God!

That wailing voice hath ceased,
 It melted into tears;

And death's sure hand the maid released,
After long mournful years.
In her beauty and her bloom
She was borne to that dark hold ;
Thence was she carried to her tomb,
Grey-hair'd, and wan, and old !

Reign of Henry the Third, 1216-1272.

The Prince and the Outlaw.

OH, it was our gallant Prince Edward,
Rode forth into Alton wood ;
His plume was white, his sword was bright,
His heart was brave and good ;
He saw the sunlight through the trees,
Checkering the grassy earth ;
He felt the breath of the summer breeze,
And his spirit was full of mirth.

It was there he met with a stranger knight,
With disdain upon his face ;
His mail was worn, and his eye spake scorn,
And full stately was his pace.

“ Now who art thou, of the darksome brow,
Who wanderest here so free ?”

“ Oh, I'm one that will walk the green green woods,
And never ask leave of thee.”

“ How now, thou churl ?” quoth the angry prince,
“ Ask pardon on thy knee !

I am England's heir, of my wrath beware,
Or ill shall it fare with thee.”

“ Art thou England's heir ?” quoth the outlaw bold ;

“ Well, if thy words be true,
I see not why, such a knight as I
Should fear for such as you.

I am Adam de Gordon, a noble free ;
Perchance thou hast heard my name."
"I have heard it, I trow (quoth the prince), and thou
Art a traitor of blackest fame.
Yield thee to me!" But the outlaw cried,
"Now, if thou knowest not fear,
Out with thy sword! by a good knight's word,
I will give thee battle here."

"Come on!" cried that prince of dauntless heart;
"Yet pause while I alight,
For I never will play the craven's part,
At odds with thee to fight."
He sprang from his steed, he drew his blade,
And a terrible fray began,
The very first stroke that Prince Edward made,
Blood from the Gordon ran.

At the second stroke that Prince Edward made,
The Gordon fell on his knee;
But he did not kneel to cry for aid—
Of a loftier heart was he.
To his feet he sprang, and the angry clang
Of their flashing swords did sound
Far through the green and solemn woods,
Stretching in beauty round.

The Gordon is pale, and his strength doth fail,
And his blood is ebbing fast,
But the spirit so high, in his flashing eye
Is dauntless to the last.
He hath struck the prince on his mailed breast,
But the prince laugh'd scornfully;

“ Oh, was it the wood-breeze stirr'd my vest,
Or a leaf from yonder tree ?”

There is bitter grief in the Gordon's eye,
For he feels his strength depart ;
It is not that he fears to die—
To be conquer'd grieves his heart ;
He sinks, like a gallant ship o'erthrown
By the blast and the driving surf :
“ I yield me *not* !” is his last faint tone,
As he falls on the trampled turf.

The prince was proud as a reinless steed—
Pride is an evil thing—
But the heart he bore was a heart indeed,
Right worthy of a king ;
He sheath'd his blade, he sprang to aid
The Gordon as he lay.
“ Rise up,” cried he, “ my valorous foe,
Thou hast borne thee well to-day.”

He kneel'd by his side, he stanch'd the tide
Of life-blood flowing free ;
With his scarf he bound each gaping wound,
And he sooth'd their agony.
He lifted the Gordon on his steed,
Himself he held the rein :
“ I hold thee,” he said, “ for a knight indeed,
And I give thee thy life again.”

There was bitter grief in the Gordon's eye,
Not for defeat that grief,
But he wept for his broken loyalty
To such a generous chief.

Humbly he bent his knightly head
 With a changed and gentle brow :
 " Oh, pardon ! I yield, I yield ! " he said ;
 " I am truly conquer'd now . "

Behold how mercy softeneth still
 The haughtiest heart that beats ;
 Pride with disdain may be answer'd again,
 But pardon at once defeats.
 The brave man felt forgiveness melt
 A heart by fear unshaken ;
 He was ready to die, for his loyalty
 To the prince he had forsaken.

Prince Edward hath brought him to Guilford Tower
 Ere that summer's day is o'er ;
 He hath led him in to the secret bower
 Of his fair wife Alianore ;¹
 His mother, the lady of gay Provence,²
 And his sire, the king, were there ;
 Oh, scarcely the Gordon dared advance
 In a presence so stately and fair.

But the prince hath kneel'd at his father's feet,—
 For the Gordon's life he sues ;
 His lady so fair, she join'd his prayer ;
 And how should the king refuse ?
 Can he his own dear son withstand,
 So duteous, brave, and true ;
 And the loveliest lady in all the land
 Kneeling before him too ?

¹ Alianore, or Eleonora, princess of Castile.

² Eleanor of Provence, wife to King Henry the Third.

“ My children, arise !” the old king said,
And a tear was in his eye ;
He laid his hand on each bright young head,
And he bless'd them fervently.
“ With a joyful heart I grant your prayer,
And I bid the Gordon live ;
Oh, the happiest part of a monarch's care
Is to pity and forgive.”

Then spake the queen so fair and free,—
“ The Gordon I will make
Steward of my royal house,” quoth she,
“ For these dear children's sake.”
May every prince be as generous
(Be this our prayer to Heaven),
And may every gallant rebel thus
Repent and be forgiven.

Reign of Edward I., 1272-1307.

The Death of King Henry the Third.

At Sicily's court Prince Edward sate,
Of a joyous heart was he,
For he came from afar from the holy war,
From battle and victory.
There strode a messenger into the hall,
He kneel'd upon his knee;
"What news dost thou bring," quoth Sicily's king,
"From the fair isle of the sea?"

"I come to Prince Edward," the messenger cried,
"And with heavy news I come;
For at eventide his young son died—
He died in his English home!"
Fair Elinore wrings her lily hands
In a mother's bitter woe;
But firm and grave Prince Edward stands,
Like a knight who meets his foe.

"Take comfort, Alianore, my wife,
Submit thee to this pain;
For it is but the God who giveth life
Recalling His gift again."
Oh, not the less fair Elinore weeps,
Her lips can speak no word;
But her dark eyes raise their tearful gaze
Up to her stedfast lord.

Another step on the marble floor;
 'Tis the prince's page, I trow—
 His page who fought on the Syrian shore;
 He cometh sad and slow.
 Fair Elinore rose in hope and fear;
 Wildly that page she met,
 It was as though she hoped to hear
 That her child was living yet.

“ Ah, master mine,” the sad page said,
 “ God smiteth oft and sore :
 Thy little daughter dear is dead !”
 He could not utter more.
 Fair Elinore raised one bitter wail,
 And she swoon'd upon the ground;
 Prince Edward's face grew somewhat pale,
 But he did not breathe a sound.

And mute he stood for a moment's space,
 Then slow and calmly spake,
 “ Bear ye the princess from the place,
 Her gentle heart will break;
 Tend her with care, and comfort her.”
 Then to the king said he,
 “ My lord, I grieve thy festal eve
 Should thus be marr'd for me.”

Oh, greatly marvell'd Sicily's lord
 His stately air to see ;
 He dared not speak one pitying word,
 But he watch'd him reverently.
 Silent were all in the royal hall;
 Not a breath was heard, until

A footstep fell like death's slow knell,
And every heart stood still.

A squire kneel'd lowly on the floor,
And he spake in humble tone,
"Henry of England breathes no more :
Thine are the crown and throne."

A sudden change o'er the prince's brow
Like a cloud's swift shadow swept ;
The strength of his heart forsook him now —
He hid his face and wept.

Oh, greatly marvell'd Sicily's king
When the hero's tears he saw ;
From a warrior-soul those tears did spring,
And the king stood mute with awe ;
But at last he spake : " O valorous prince,
Right strangely hast thou done :
Thou didst shed no tear for thy daughter dear !
Thou weepedst not for thy son !

But now thine aged sire is dead,
Like a worn-out pilgrim sleeping,
Though he leaves a crown for thy royal head,
Thou like a child art weeping !"
His noble face did Prince Edward raise,
And his tears became him now,
Like dew-drops sheen on the laurel green,
When it binds a conqueror's brow.

" Ah, king," he said, " when infants die,
We mourn but for a day ;
For God can restore as many more,
Lovely and loved as they :

But when a noble father dies,
Our tears pour forth like rain ;
Once from high Heaven is a father given,
Once—and, oh, never again !”

Reign of Edward II., 1307-1327.

The Tournament.

THE churches twelve of Wallingford
A stately sight they were,
When gleaming shields were hanging
From every column fair ;
For a mile around the city
Earth's alter'd face was bright
With banner and pavilion,
With steed, and squire, and knight.

For king Edward holds a tournament ;
His heralds, far and near,
Have borne the joyous message
To baron, prince, and peer.
They are coming in by thousands ;
Woe to that warrior's fame
Whose knightly shield its place must yield
At the wand's light touch of shame !

The airs of heaven were wearied,
Long ere that morning shone,
With the sounds of clashing armour
And the horn's exulting tone ;
Down many a woodland avenue,
Up many a grassy slope,
Came troops of glittering horsemen,
All gay with knightly hope.

And the serf forsook his labour,
And the ladye left her bower,—
They gather like the clouds of heaven
Before an April shower.
The lists are fairly order'd,
And every heart beats high
When the clarion's thrilling summons
Tells that the hour is nigh.

They have left each gay pavilion,
They are moving o'er the plain ;
There rides Sir Piers de Gaveston,
Chief of a king-like train :
By his proud and stately bearing,
By his fair and rich array,
Ye might take him for a monarch
Upon his crowning day ;
But like to plants that wither
In the hot sirocco's path,
So every face he passes
Grows pale with sudden wrath.
Ah, little seest thou, Gaveston,
With thy bright and reckless eye,
The doom that is before thee,
And the death that thou must die !

Yet the scowling gloom of Pembroke,
And Warwick's haughty glance,
The mutter'd curse of Arundel,
And Evreux' look askance,
The sullen frown of Lancaster,
And Warren's wrathful mien,

The bright and angry blushes
On the fair cheeks of the queen ;
Her eye's disdainful beauty
As she pass'd the foe she scorn'd —
These might have warn'd that boaster :
He *was* not to be warn'd !

And there rode hapless Edward,
A graceful prince and gay ;
But weakness in his ready laugh
And his eye's uncertain ray ;
Who dream'd, that saw his maiden-grasp
On his palfrey's broider'd reins,
That the blood of the old Plantagenets
Was running in his veins !

And there rode fair Queen Isabelle,
A girl scarce fifteen years ;
Like a swan on a breezeless river
Her snowy neck she rears ;
Her beauty's proud magnificence
Was matchless in the world,
But ah ! beneath its sweet rose-wreath
Lay the dread serpent curl'd.
Her smile of treacherous softness,
Her dark and glittering eye,
Were like a slumbering tempest
In the depths of a tropic sky.

On moved the gay procession,
And many a dame did lead
By the shining rein of a silver chain
Her warrior's pacing steed ;

Each mantle gemm'd floats gaily,
Each courser stamps and fumes,
'Tis a heaving sea, whose billows free
Are banners and dancing plumes.

Oh, for the tongue of a minstrel
To tell in lightning words
The deeds of that glorious tournament,
The fame of those flashing swords !
How a fair and a queenly circle
Beheld the knights engage,
Like clear stars watching stedfastly
The foaming ocean's rage ;
And amid those brows of beauty
Lofty and calm arose
The head of some ancient hero
Wearing its crown of snows ;
'Twas a thrilling sight to witness
Each worn-out warrior's gaze
On a strife where he must not mingle,
On the deeds of his younger days.

Like walls of glittering armour
At first the champions stand,
As the Red Sea stood when its raging flood
Was cleft by God's own hand.
And the crash of their strong ranks charging
Arose when they met on the plain,
Like the roar of those bursting waters
Rushing together again.

Hark, how the watchful heralds
The shouts of their onset gave,

“ Charge, warriors ! Death to horses !
Fame to the sons of the brave ! ”

Those shouts are rising louder

At every well-aim'd blow,

Or whenever a lance is shiver'd

Fairly on breast or brow.

The air is full of battle,

It is full of the trumpets' sound,

Of the tramp of dashing horses,

And the cries of the crowd around ;

The earth is strown with beauty,

It is strown with fair plumes torn,

With glove, and scarf, and streamer,

For the love of ladies worn ;

But each maiden watch'd her champion,

And oft her white hands sent

Fresh gifts for every token

That was lost in the tournament.

Oh ! with such eyes above them,

Such voices to cheer the strife,

No marvel those warriors tilted

Like men who are tilting for life !

But at length the sports are over !

Changed was the joyous scene,

When many a knight lay gasping,

Unhorsed upon the green ;

Their squires are near to raise them,

They bear them soft and slow,

And loving eyes all mournful

Attend them as they go.

Not oft was life in danger ;

Yet might those sweet eyes grieve

That in their sight, their own true knight
Should not the wreath receive.

Now shout ye for the victor !
The warrior to whose sword
Lady, and prince, and herald
The prize of fame award !
Doubt not his heart is thrilling
Thus on the turf to kneel,
While lovely hands unloose the bands
That clasp his helm of steel !
While every lip is busy
With the honour of his name,
And with glowing cheeks, each good knight speaks
The story of his fame !
Dear are thy gifts, O glory !
Dear is thy crown unstain'd,
When the true heart bears witness
That it was nobly gain'd !

Room for the queen ! she cometh
To grace the conqueror now,
With a chaplet of green laurel
She stoops to wreath his brow !
A kiss—a gem—a garland—
These hath his good lance won,
And the king's own lips give honour
To the deeds that he hath done.
With dance, and song, and banquet,
The festive day shall close,
Till, wearied out with pleasure,
The warriors seek repose.

Yet lasts the giddy revel
Till the shining east grows pale,—
Ah, what a bright beginning
For such a darksome tale !
Even then the storm had gather'd
Which should burst in coming years,
For the reign of the second Edward
Was a reign of blood and tears !

Reign of Edward III., 1327-1377.

The Black Prince of England.

I'LL tell you a tale of a knight, my boy,
 The bravest that ever was known ;
 A lion he was in the fight, my boy,
 A lamb when the battle was done.
 Oh, he need not be named ; for who has not heard
 Of the glorious son of King Edward the Third ?

Armour he wore as black as jet ;
 His sword was keen and good ;
 He conquer'd every foe he met,
 And he spared them when subdued.
 Valiant and generous, and gentle and bold,
 Was the Black Prince of England in days of old.

Often he charged with spear and lance
 At the head of his valorous knights ;
 But the battle of Poitiers, won in France,
 Was the noblest of all his fights ;
 And every British heart should be
 Proud when it thinks of that victory.

The French were many — the English few ;
 But the Black Prince little heeded :
 His knights, he knew, were brave and true ;
 Their arms were all he needed.
 He ask'd not *how many* might be the foe ;
Where are they ? was all that he sought to know.

So he spurr'd his steed, and he couch'd his lance,
And the battle was won and lost ;
Captive he took King John of France,
The chief of that mighty host :
Faint grew the heart of each gallant foe ;
Their leader was taken ; their hopes were low.

Brave were the French ; but at last they yield,
All wearied and worn out :
The prince is conqueror of the field ;
And the English soldiers shout,
“ God save our prince, our mighty lord !
Victory waiteth on his sword ! ”

Of all the knights who fought that day,
James Audley was the best ;
His wounds were three, won valiantly,
On cheek, and brow, and breast :
And the Black Prince said, when the fight was o'er,
He never had seen such a knight before.

And did they chain King John of France ?
Was he in dungeon laid ?
Oh, little ye know what a generous foe
Our English Edward made !
A gentle heart, and an arm of might—
These are the things that make a knight.

He set King John on a lofty steed,
White as the driven snow,
And without all pride he rode beside,
On a palfrey slight and low :
He spoke to the king with a reverent mien,
As though the king had *his* captor been.

He treated King John like an honour'd guest ;
When at the feast he sate
With courteous air, and with forehead bare,
The prince did on him wait ;
And even when they to England came,
Our generous hero was the same.

But the prisoner's heart it grew not light,
For all the prince could say :
A captive king and a conquer'd knight,
Oh, how could he be gay ?
E'en while his courteous words were speaking,
For his own dear France his heart was breaking.

Another lay shall the story tell
Of this valiant king and true :
He loved the Black Prince passing well,
And his worth full well he knew.
Then let us all unite to praise
That hero of the olden days.

The Romans, when they won the day
And bore their captives home,
Caused them to march in sad array,
Fetter'd and chain'd, through Rome ;
And every foe, though good and brave,
They held as victim or as slave.

But ours was a Christian conqueror,
Generous, and true, and kind :
Though the grave has now closed o'er his brow,
He hath left this rule behind,—
That valour should ever wedded be
To mercy, and not to cruelty.

The Captivity of King John of France.

“ IN mine own land the sun shines bright,
The morning breeze blows fair ;
I must not look upon that light,
I must not feel that air.
The chain is heavy on my heart,
Although my limbs are free ;
A bitter, bitter loss thou art,
O precious liberty !”

It was King John lamented thus,
With many a mournful word ;
But gentle, kind, and chivalrous,
Was the heart of him who heard :
The Black Prince came—he loved to bring
Comfort and sweet relief,
So he spake softly to the king,
And strove to soothe his grief.

“ Now cheer thee, noble friend !” he said ;
“ Right bravely didst thou fight ;
Thine honour is untarnished ;
Thou art a stainless knight.
That man should ne'er desponding be
Who winneth fame in strife ;
'Tis a better thing than liberty,
A better thing than life.

I grant thee one full year,” he said ;
“ For a year thou shalt be free :
Go back to France, and there persuade
Thy lords to ransom thee.

But if thy ransom they refuse,
And do not heed thy pain,
Our realm must not its captive lose—
Thou must return again.

So pledge me now thy royal word,
And pledge it solemnly,
That thou, the captive of my sword,
Wilt faithful be to me.”
The king he pledged his royal faith—
He pledged it gladsomely ;
He promised to be true till death :
Of joyous heart was he.

Then did those generous foes embrace
Closely as brethren might,—
“ Farewell, and God be with your grace ;” —
“ Farewell, thou peerless knight.”
The wind was fair, the sea was blue,
The sky without a speck,
When the good ship o’er the waters flew,
With King John upon its deck.

With eager hope his heart beat high
When he sprang on his own dear shore ;
But sad and downcast was his eye
Ere one brief month was o’er.
Glad were the lords of lovely France
When they beheld their king ;
But, oh ! how alter’d was their glance,
When he spoke of ransoming !

They told of wasted revenues,
Of fortunes waxing low ;

And when their words did not refuse,
Their looks said plainly, "No."
Sore grew the heart of that good king,
As closed the winter drear;
And when the rose proclaim'd the spring,
He hail'd it with a tear.

For the year was gliding fast away,
And gold he could not gain,
And honour summon'd him to pay
His freedom back again.
And now the summer-noon is bright,
The warm breeze woos the scent
From a thousand flowers of red and white—
The year is fully spent!

"Paris, farewell, thou ancient town!
Farewell, my woods and plains!
Farewell, my kingdom and my crown!
And welcome, English chains!
Trim, trim the bark, and hoist the sail,
And bid my train advance,
I have found that loyal faith may fail—
I leave thee, thankless France."

These bitter words spake good King John;
But his liegemen counsel gave:
"What recks it that the year is gone?
There yet is time to save.
Thou standest yet on thine own good land,
Forget thy plighted word,—
Remain! and to thy foe's demand
We'll answer with the sword."

But the good King John spake firm and bold ;
And oh ! his words should be
Graven in characters of gold
On each heart's memory :
“ Were truth disowned by all mankind,
A scorned and banished thing,
A resting-place it still should find
In the breast of every king.”

Again the good ship cleaves the sea
Before a favouring air,
But it beareth to captivity,
And not to freedom fair.
Yet when King John set foot on land,
Sad he could scarcely be,
For the Black Prince took him by the hand,
And welcomed him courteously.

To Savoy Castle he was brought,
With fair and royal state :
Full many a squire, in rich attire,
Did on his pleasure wait.
They did not as a prisoner hold
That noble king and true,
But as dear guest, whose high behest
'Twas honour and joy to do.

Of treaty and of ransom then
The prince and he had speech ;
Like friends and fellow-countrymen,
Great was the love of each ;
No angry thought—no gesture proud,
Not a hasty word they spoke,

But a brotherhood of heart they vowed,
And its bond they never broke.

In Savoy Castle died King John—
They buried him royally ;
And grief through all the land is gone
That such a knight should die.
And the prince was wont to say this thing
Whene'er his name was spoken,—
“ He was a warrior and a king
Whose word was never broken.”

The Six Burghers of Calais.

THE burghers six of Calais,
True were they and brave ;
To save their fellow-townsmen
Their lives they freely gave.
Will ye hear their story ?
Come listen to my lay,
I will tell ye of King Edward,
The gallant and the gay.

Edward the Third of England,
A mighty prince was he ;
To win the town of Calais
He hath cross'd the sea,
With all his gallant nobles,
And all his soldiers brave,—
They were a stately party
To ride upon the wave !

Around the walls of Calais
They waited many a day,
Till the king's right royal spirit
Grew weary of delay :
His eagerness avail'd not,
The city still held out ;
The king grew very angry,
But still the walls were stout.

The fury of a monarch
A stone wall cannot rend,

As little is it able
A lofty heart to bend ;
But a mightier than King Edward
Assail'd those stedfast men,—
The slow strong hand of Famine
Was closing on them then.

The feeble ones grew feebler,
The mighty ones grew weak ;
Dim was each eye, though dauntless,
And pale was every cheek :
But round about the city
That ruthless army stayed,
So to their fainting hunger
No food might be conveyed.

The governor of Calais,¹
A stalwart knight was he,
For his king and for his country
He had fought right valiantly ;
But he found his valour useless,
And he saw his soldiers die,
So he came before the English,
And spake with dignity :

“ What terms, what terms, King Edward,
What terms wilt thou accord,
If I yield this goodly city
To own thee for its lord ?”
King Edward gave him answer,—
His wrath was very hot,—

¹ Sir John de Vienne, a knight of great valour, was then governor of Calais.

“Ye rebel hounds of Calais,
Your crimes I pardon not.

Six of your richest burghers
As captives I demand,
On every neck a halter,
A chain on every hand ;
And when their lives have answered
For this their city’s crime,
Then will I think of mercy,—
Till then, it is not time.”

The governor was silent,
His heart was full of pain ;
Then spake Sir Walter Manny,
Chief of the monarch’s train :
“The fittest time for mercy,
My liege, is ever—*now* ;
Oh, turn away thine anger !
Oh, do not knit thy brow !

Call back thy words, King Edward,
Call back what thou hast said,
For thou canst not call the spirit
Back to the gallant dead.”

“Now hold thy peace, Sir Walter,”
The monarch sternly cried ;
“I will not be entreated,
I will not be defied !

Be silent, all my nobles :
And thou, Sir John de Vienne,
Come with six wealthy burghers,
Or come thou not agen !”

The king he spake so fiercely
That no one dared reply ;
Sir John went back to Calais
Slowly and mournfully.

The warriors and the burghers
He summoned to his hall,
And he told King Edward's pleasure,
Full sadly, to them all :
" My friends and fellow-townsmen,
Ye hear the tyrant's will ;
We had better die together,
And keep our city still ! "

There was silence for a moment,—
They were feeble, they were few,
But *one* spirit was among them,
Which nothing could subdue ;
Out cried a generous burgher :
" Oh, never be it said
That the loyal hearts of Calais
To die could be afraid !

First of the destined captives
I name myself for death,
And in my Saviour's mercy
Undoubting is my faith."'
The name of this true hero
Ye should keep with reverent care ;
Let it never be forgotten !—
It was Eustace de St. Pierre.

Like a watchfire lit at midnight—
Strike but a single spark,

And the eager flame spreads quickly
 Where all before was dark ;
 So were their spirits kindled
 By the word of bold St. Pierre,
 His faith and his devotion
 Gave strength to their despair.

Five other noble merchants
 Their names that instant gave,
 To join with generous Eustace
 Their countrymen to save :
 Their comrades wept around them
 Tears for such parting meet ;
 And they led those willing captives
 To stern King Edward's feet.

They came in brave obedience
 To Edward's fierce command ;
 On every neck a halter,
 A chain on every hand.
 Now when the king beheld them,
 Right fiery grew his eye,—
 " Strike off their heads !" he thundered ;
 " Each man of them shall die !"

But forth stepped Queen Philippa,¹
 The gentle, good, and fair ;
 She kneeled before King Edward,
 And thus she spake her prayer :
 (It was a sight full touching
 That honoured queen to see,

¹ Philippa of Hainault, the fair and virtuous wife of Edward III.

Before the knights and nobles,
Low kneeling on her knee.)

“ My loving lord and husband,”—
’Twas thus the fair queen spake,—
“ Grant me these generous captives,
Oh, spare them for my sake !

I am thy true companion ;
I crossed the stormy sea,
A weak and fearful woman,
And all for love of thee.

I have been faithful to thee
Through all our wedded life,
Nor didst thou ever find me
A disobedient wife ;
Then do not thou repulse me
In this my first request ;
Grant me their lives, I pray thee,—
In nought have they transgress’d.”

The king look’d long upon her :
“ I would thou wert not here !
Yet I refuse thee nothing,
Because thou art so dear.”
Up sprang that joyous lady,
And eagerly she bade
That they should loose the fetters
Upon those captives laid.

From round their necks she loosened
The cruel halter’s band ;
To each a golden noble
She gave with her own hand ;

She bade them be conducted
Back to their native place,—
To friends, and wives, and children,
To the joy of their embrace.

Oh, who shall paint their meeting !
Oh, who shall speak their bliss !
Too weak for aught so mighty
The power of language is.
How did the fond eyes brighten
Around each quiet hearth !
The peace of such deep rapture
Is seldom given to earth.

Oh, out then spake King Edward :
“ How different are our parts !
I may win fair cities,
But my queen she winneth hearts.
God bless thee, sweet Philippa ;
And mayst thou ever be
As dear to all the English
As now thou art to me !”

Reign of Richard II., 1377-1399.

The little Queen.¹

A LITTLE child—scarce eight years old—
And she was crowned a queen !
Oh, strange and scarcely to be told
Must her young thoughts have been ;
For how should pomp, and storm, and strife,
And prideful discontent,
With childhood's soft and dreamy life
Be for an instant blent ?

They took her from her mother's care,
They bore her o'er the sea,
-And to the King of England fair
Wedded her solemnly.
Oh, much that mother's heart must miss,
At morn and evening hours,
Her little one's accustom'd kiss,
Dropping like dew on flowers.

Beneath grey Windsor's stately shade,
The aspect of her life

¹ The princess Isabelle of France, who was married to King Richard II. ere she had completed her ninth year. He was then about thirty years old.

Seem'd a green, quiet, forest glade,
 With songs and wood-flowers rife.
 No cloud to mar, no grief to break
 Its spell so sweet and deep;
 'Twas like the picture on a lake
 When breezes are asleep.

King Richard was a gentle king ;
 His visits came like those
 Which the gay sunshine makes in spring
 To rouse the slumbering rose.
 Her childish tasks were flung away,
 While, laughing at her glee,
 The monarch mingled in her play,
 And loved its liberty.

Or down some cool, dark avenue,
 Hand clasping hand, they roam,
 While in her gaze his fancy drew
 Pictures of days to come ;
 Little reck'd she of crown or throne,
 Of regal pomp and pride ;
 " Oh, would I were a woman grown,
 To make *thee* blest !" she cried.

Ah, little knewest thou, gentle king,
 Nor thou, fair infant queen,
 The storms which coming days should bring
 To mar so sweet a scene ;
 Rebellion fierce and tameless scorn
 Wax'd rampant in the land,

Till sword and sceptre both were torn
From good King Richard's hand.

To Havering Bower the queen was brought,
Where, captive and subdued,
Too soon her childish heart was taught
The cares of womanhood.
The tempest of her sudden grief
Came like a frost in spring,
That withers every bud and leaf
Before its blossoming.

Sternly her sullen guards refuse
All tidings of her lord ;
Her eager quest she oft renews,
But they answer not a word.
Strange fears upon her youthful breast
With dark forebodings fell ;
But still his name in prayer she blest,
And still she loved him well.

At length, one summer's morn, 'tis said,
Forth journeying from her bower,
She met the rebel troop who led
Her monarch to the Tower ;
O piteous meeting ! Grave surprise
Check'd even the gaoler train,
When from that child's young earnest eyes
The tears brake forth like rain.

She spake not many words, but strove,
In broken phrase and brief,

Somewhat of comfort and of love
 To mingle with his grief;
 " God will protect thee in thy fall,"
 (Thus sobb'd the captive queen);
 " Oh, father, mother, husband, all,
 Thou unto me hast been !"

It is sad to see an infant fade
 Beneath our very gaze,
 As a lily in some poisonous shade
 Droops, withers, and decays ;
 It is sad to see the eye's pure light
 Grow fainter, day by day,
 And the young, young life, so fresh and bright,
 Ebb gradually away.

But sadder when the *heart's* young life
 In the glory of its morn
 Is dimm'd by grief, and marr'd by strife,
 And stifled ere it dawn ;
 When childhood's hopes are changed to fears,
 And childhood's mirth to gloom,
 And life's great treasure-house of tears
 Is open'd in life's bloom !

His crown, his hopes, his freedom gone,
 King Richard pined away,
 Till they slew him in his dungeon lone,
 Like a lion brave at bay ;
 In vain his single strength he sets
 'Gainst the rebels' leaguèd power,

Though the soul of the Plantagenets
Was strong in him that hour.

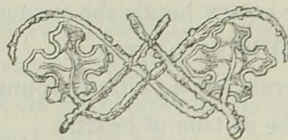
Long, long the false usurper tried,
With speech and promise fair,
To win his captive queen as bride
For Henry, England's heir.
Ever she answer'd stedfastly,
As one that shrank from strife,
" King Richard's widow will I die,
As I have lived his wife !

Still are mine eyes with weeping dim ;
And 'twere a fearful thing
That I should wed the son of him
Who slew my gentle king."
In woe her snowy hands she wrung,
And went to weep apart ;
'Twas marvel that a child so young
Should be so true of heart.

Thus years all bootlessly were spent
In pleadings strong but vain ;
Till, freed at last, the exile went
Back to her France again.
Oh, trust me, many tears she shed
As she forsook the land
Where the lord she loved so much lay dead,
Slain by a traitor's hand.

A place of grief had England been—
Of grief, and woe, and wrong,

Crushing the heart of that child-queen,
So desolate and young.
Yet firm was she, though wrath might burn,
And civil war rage wild.
Ah, let all men a lesson learn
From that fair, faithful child !



LAYS AND BALLADS.

Part Second.

LAYS AND BALLADS

LAYS AND BALLADS.

PART SECOND.



The Lay of King James I. in his Captivity.

[James the First was the second son of King Robert III., and became heir to the throne of Scotland at the age of eleven years by the death of his elder brother, the unfortunate Earl of Rothsay, who was barbarously starved to death in prison by his own uncle, the wicked Duke of Albany. James fell into the hands of the English, and was detained by them in captivity during eighteen years. He was imprisoned in Windsor castle; and from the window of his tower he was wont to see the Lady Joanna, the fair daughter of the Earl of Somerset, walking among her flowers in the garden. He fell in love with her; and when he was at length ransomed by his people, he conducted her to Scotland as his queen. He was a man of high and energetic intellect, indomitable resolution, and intense devotion to his country, which he earnestly longed to rescue from the misery and misrule by which it was distracted, while given up to the government of his unprincipled uncle and yet more worthless cousins.]

MORN to eve, and eve to morn,
Listless heart and eyes unsleeping—
Want, or woe, or pain, or scorn,
O'er this lifeless desert sweeping,
Welcome were, as pangs, for me
Breaking death's dread lethargy.

Like the wretch, whose weary pace
 To and fro, for years alone,
 Left at length an awful trace
 Printed on the unyielding stone,
 Time's slow footsteps, day by day,
 Wear my very soul away.

Creeping through this narrow grate,
 Stretching o'er these walls of gloom,
 Even the air is like a weight,
 Even the sky is like a tomb ;
 Nature's noble things and free
 Put on dreariness for me.

Nay, it is not thus ! I have
 Empire o'er a world within ;
 Lo, my kingly wand I wave,
 Lo, the shadowy scenes begin !
 Veilèd shapes of hours unknown
 Stand before my spirit's throne.

Life—mine own, my coming life !
 Well I know what thou shalt be ;
 Shining bliss and stormy strife,
 Labour, hope, and victory !
 Ceaseless efforts upward tending,
 And at last in triumph ending !

Thou hast gifts, and thou hast tasks,—
 Give the last—mine aim is won !
 Only this my spirit asks,
 Strength and space to labour on ;
 Lo, mine eyes exulting see
 Scotland blest, and blest through me !

Ah, my country ! Prostrate now,
Vex'd by pity, stung by scorn,
Like a noble stag brought low,
Striving, sinking, bleeding, torn ;
All thine ancient honour dies,
In the dust thy glory lies !

Mine to staunch those gaping wounds,
Mine to raise that shadowed face,
Mine to chain those ruthless hounds,
Baying on their bloody chase ;
Mine to wreath thy brows once more
With the bays which once they wore.

Oh, for power ! But it shall come !
By thy woods, and steeps, and seas,
Every hearth shall be a home,
Every heart shall be at peace ;
In thy huts no slaves shall be,
In thy halls no tyranny !

If then, night and day alike,
I a wakeful warder stand,
Swift to spare, yet prompt to strike,
Calm of heart and strong of hand ;
Lone were such a lot, and hard,
Were itself its sole reward.

But a dearer hope is mine,
Not unshared my toils shall be—
Shining as a star may shine
O'er the stern and troubled sea,
Hope, and guide, and goal thou art
In the brightness of thy heart !

Known but dimly from afar,
Seen but through a dungeon-grate,
Still thine eye hath been my star,—
Still thy smile shall be my fate,
Throned upon that brow serene,
Strength, hope, purity, are seen.

Wherefore rise those blushes bright,
Half ashamed, beneath my gazing?
Wherefore sink thine eyes of light
Scarce their ivory veil upraising?
'Tis the future stirs within thee,
Thou shalt love, and I shall win thee!

Fare thee well! God's favour rest
On thy home, thy heart, and thee!
Still thou leav'st my spirit blest,
Blest in hope and memory;
Past and Future round me seem,
While the Present is a dream.

Dungeon-bar and galling chain,
Are ye past away from me?
Ay, for outward bonds are vain
While the kingly heart is free!
Father, to my spirit's night
Thou hast spoken—there is light!

The Death of James I.

PAST was the day of festal mirth ;
The monarch stood beside the hearth,
Whose flickering brands cast changeful glow
On his bright eye and stately brow ;
Upon that calm and noble face
Deep thoughts had left their living trace,—
Thoughts, such as press, with giant power,
A common life into an hour ;
Each line of lofty meaning there
Was graven by the hand of care,
And the flash of that triumphant eye,
That arching lip's stern majesty,
Told of full many a foe withstood,—
Without, disdain'd — within, subdued !

But gentler thoughts arise—and well
That smile's subduing light may tell
(Like gleams that break the thunder-cloud,
Speaking of heaven behind its shroud)
How 'neath that haughty aspect lies
A heart of kindest sympathies.
Oh, still that smile must shine most bright
On her who lives but in its light,
His queen, his lady—born to share
His fleeting joy, his ceaseless care ;
Watching his fame with pride, as prone
To think his greatest deeds her own,
Yet with deep love, that strives to make
Herself as nothing for his sake.

Now at his feet she sits,—how fair
 That spacious brow and shining hair,
 Those lips no painter's art could reach,
 Those glistening eyes whose light is speech,
 That slender form of stately mien,
 That softest cheek, as crystal sheen,
 Whose hue was of such tender rose
 As sunset flings on fallen snows ;
 No marvel that the monarch's eye
 Dwells on her face delightedly,
 No marvel that he loves to meet
 A gaze so fond, so full, so sweet !

Around, apart, a graceful band,
 The maidens of her service stand,
 With snooded brow, and plaided breast,
 And bearing modest, but serene.
 First 'mid the fairest and the best
 Have Scotia's daughters ever been ;
 They pass the tale, the song, the jest—
 A blither group was never seen.
 Oh, pause a while, brief hours of bliss !
 Upon a scene so sweet as this
 Oh, ruthless night, forbear to close,
 With thy grim train of ghastly woes !
 In vain ! It comes, the hour of doom ;
 These joys but herald deeper gloom,
 They are as flowers that hide a tomb !

What sound was that ? The clash of mail ?
 Why turns each lovely cheek so pale ?
 Why start they from their seats, and stand
 Each clasping quick her neighbour's hand ?

Again!—and nearer!—hark, a cry
As of a brave heart's agony;
A shriek that rends the quivering air,
The very cadence of despair!
Oh, save the king! No thought has power
But this in such a fearful hour;
Oh, save the king! Too well we know
They come, they come, the traitor foe!
All hope is vain, the guards are slain,
Each faithful to his care,
The gates are past, and clattering fast,
With a sound like a rushing thunder-blast,
Their tramp is on the stair!
Not to yon casement fly—beneath
Stand the grim messengers of death,
Their dull blades in the moonshine gleaming,
With the blood of loyal hearts all steaming!
There is a cell beneath the floor,
Oh, seek it ere they burst the door!
One effort more,—they lift the board,—
By eager hands impell'd, implored,
Even in that hour of agony
Disdaining from his foes to fly,
The king descends—too late, too late!
His strife is vain who strives with fate;
They come—each step resounding near
Strikes like a stab upon the ear!

Shall Scotland's prince thus aidless die
And with a Douglas standing by?
Forbid it years of faith and fame,
Clothing in light that ancient name!

Barr'd is that quivering door,—but how?

'Tis by a slender arm of snow!

A girl hath darted from the band,

And, where the weighty bar should stand,

She thrusts her soft, slight arm, and cries,

With whitening lips and gleaming eyes,

“'Tis fast—a woman's arm is there;

Now, men, come onward if ye dare!”

Without a sound or start

Breathless she stood—the first fell stroke

That fragile barrier crush'd and broke,

But not one cry of terror woke

From that undaunted heart!

Till, as they dropp'd the sheltering plank,

Loosing her desperate hold, she sank

(For then the iron hand of pain

Closed on her heart and chill'd each vein);

She sank, but ere her senses fled,

“Thank God! he's saved!” she faintly said.

Such deeds can woman's spirit do—

O Catharine Douglas, fair and true,

Let Scotland keep thy holy name

Still first upon her ranks of fame!

Kind was that swoon! Thou didst not see

What deeds of horror then befell;

Well may thy comrades envy thee,

Blind to that piteous spectacle!

Those sounds of woe thou didst not hear,

Thou didst not see that sight of fear

When banded traitors slew their king;

When, weeping, with dishevell'd hair,

In pale but beautiful despair,
 A queen, a wife, a woman, there
 Did kneel to men who scorn'd her prayer,
 Her husband and their prince to spare !
 Ah, hapless queen ! As hopeful 'twere
 Round the roused tiger in his lair
 For mercy and for aid to cling !
 All bleeding sinks she in the dust,
 Pierced by some stern and savage hand—
 Let shame's irreparable rust
 For ever stain that ruthless brand !
 Let that foul deed recorded be,
 A warning to futurity,
 What fiends in man's dark breast awaken
 When loyal faith is once forsaken !

Like a chased lion, wounded, worn,
 But still terrific in his fall,
 With ebbing strength and eyes of scorn
 The king confronts those traitors all ;
 Outnumber'd soon, but unsubdued,
 He sinks before them in his blood—
 No victors they,—the hero dies
 Worn out with useless victories !

Weep, Scotland, weep, that tameless soul,
 That heart, great, generous, warm, and true ;
 As countless ages onward roll
 Such spirits come but far and few.
 Weep, Scotland, weep, and not in vain ;
 Thy tears have wash'd away the stain,
 An hundred deeds of after-time
 Have well redeem'd that hour of crime ;

Though darkening shame defile the name
 And scutcheon of the traitor Grahame,
 How Scotsmen for their king can die
 Let Cameron and Montrose reply !

The Lay of Sir William Wallace.

THE grey hill and the purple heath
Are round me as I stand ;
The torrent hoar doth sternly roar,
The lake lies calm and grand ;
The altars of the living rock
'Neath yon blue skies are bare,
And a thousand mountain-voices mock
Mine accents on the air.

O land most lovely and beloved,—
Whether in morn's bright hues,
Or in the veil, so soft, so pale,
Woven by twilight dews,
God's bounty pours from sun and cloud
Beauty on shore and wave,—
I lift my hands, I cry aloud,
Man shall not make thee slave !

Ye everlasting witnesses,—
Most eloquent, though dumb,—
Sky, shore, and seas, light, mist, and breeze,
Receive me, when I come !
How could I, in this holy place,
Stand with unshamèd brow,
How look on earth's accusing face,
If I forget my vow ?

Not few nor slight his burdens are
Who gives himself to stand
Stedfast and sleepless as a star,
Watching his fatherland ;

Strong must his will be, and serene,
His spirit pure and bright,
His conscience vigilant and keen,
His arm an arm of might.

From the closed temple of his heart,
Sealed as a sacred spring,
Self must he spurn, and set apart
As an unholy thing ;
Misconstrued where he loves the best,
Where most he hopes, betrayed,
The quenchless watchfire in his breast
Must neither fail nor fade.

And his shall be a holier meed
Than earthly lips may tell ;—
Not in the end, but in the deed,
Doth truest honour dwell.
His land is one vast monument,
Bearing the record high
Of a spirit with itself content,
And a name that cannot die !

For this, with joyous heart, I give
Fame, pleasure, love, and life ;
Blest, for a cause so high, to live
In ceaseless, hopeless strife :
For this to die, with sword in hand,
Oh, blest and honour'd thrice !—
God, countrymen, and fatherland,
Accept the sacrifice !

Bruce and Douglas.

LAY THE FIRST.

THE DEATH OF BRUCE.

THERE is darkness in the chamber,
There is silence by the hearth,
For pale, and cold, and dying,
Lies a great one of the earth ;
That eye's dim ray is faint and grey,
Those lips have lost their red,
And powerless is a people's love
To lift that languid head.

Through hilly Caledonia
Woe spreadeth far and fast,
As spreads the shadow of a cloud
Before a thunder-blast,—
For it is THE BRUCE whose mighty heart
Is beating now its last !

A tearful group was gathered
Around that bed of death :
There stood undaunted Randolph,
Knight of the Perfect Wreath ;
And Campbell, strong and steadfast
Through danger and despair ;
And valiant Grey, and stern La Haye,
And loyal Lennox there ;
There, last in name, but first in fame,
And faithful to the end,

All weeping stood Lord James the Good,
 True knight and constant friend ;
 And there, with eyes of grave surprise,
 Fast rooted to the place,
 The monarch's son, scarce four years old,
 Gazed in his father's face !

But the stillness of that solemn room
 Was stirred by scarce a breath—
 Silent were all, and silently
 THE BRUCE encountered Death.

They stood and saw, with reverent awe,
 How ever, upward glancing,
 He seemed to watch some dim array
 Of warrior-shapes advancing ;
 For as he lay in silence,
 His life's long memories,
 Like a slow and stately pageant,
 Did pass before his eyes.

And first—brief days of bitter shame,
 Repented and disowned—
 His early sins before him came,
 By many an after-deed of fame
 Effaced and well atoned.

One passing shade of noble grief
 Darkened the brow of the dying chief,
 But fast it faded from the sight,
 Lost in his life's remember'd light ;
 For then of burning thoughts arose
 A shadowy and unnumbered host,—
 And Methven's field of blood and woes,
 And Rachrin's unforgotten coast,

Where Freedom's form, through gloom and storm,
Did first for Scotland shine,
As faint by night a beacon-light
Glimmers through mist and brine.
And Arran's isle, by shady Clyde,
Where, when the summer noon was high,
Friends, parted long and sorely tried,
Met, and went forth to victory ;
Where loud the Bruce his bugle wound,
And Douglas answered to the sound !

Then name by name, and deed by deed,
Bright trains of glorious thought succeed ;—
The midnight watch, till o'er the foam
Gleamed the lone beacon guiding home,
And on old Carrick's well-loved shore
The exile plants his foot once more ;
The ford, beside whose waters grey
His single arm kept hosts at bay ;
The hurrying march, the bold surprise,
The chase, the ambush, the disguise.
Now leader of a conquering band,
Now track'd by bloodhounds, swift and stern ;
Till Glory's sun, at God's command,
Stood still at last on BANNOCKBURN,
And stamped in characters of flame
On Scottish breasts THE BRUCE'S name.—
Oh, seldom deathbed memories
Are populous with thoughts like these !

To the face of the dying monarch
Came a sudden glow, and proud,

But brief as the tinge of sunset
Flung on a wandering cloud ;
But see — his lips are parting,
Though scarce a sound be heard,—
Down stoops the noble Douglas
To catch each feeble word ;
And all the knights and warriors,
Holding their tightened breath,
Close in a narrower circle
Around the couch of death.

“ O Douglas, O my brother !
My heart is ill at ease ;
Unceasingly mine aching eye
One haunting vision sees ;
It sees the lengthened arches,
The solemn aisles of prayer,
And the death of the traitor Comyn
Upon the altar-stair.
Woe's me ! that deed unholy
Lies like a heavy weight,
Crushing my wearied conscience
Before heaven's open gate.
Fain would I wend a pilgrim
Forth over land and sea,
Where God's dear Son for sinners died —
Alas, it must not be !
But if thy love be stedfast
As it was proved of yore,—
When these few struggling pulses
Are stilled, and all is o'er,
Unclose this lifeless bosom,
Take thence this heart of mine,

And bear it safely for my sake
To holy Palestine :
Well pleased my heart shall tarry
In thy fair company ;
For it was wont, while yet in life,
Ever to dwell with thee !”

The dying king was silent,
And down the Douglas kneeled—
A kiss upon his sovereign’s hand
His ready promise sealed ;
Never a word he answered,
In sorrow strong and deep,
But he wept, that iron soldier,
Tears such as women weep.
The Bruce hath prest him to his breast
With faint but eager grasp,
And the strong man’s arm was tremulous
As that weak dying clasp !

That last embrace unloosing,
The monarch feebly cried,
“ Oh, lift me up, my comrades dear,
And let me look on Clyde !”
Widely they flung the casement,
And there in beauty lay
That broad and rolling river
All sparkling to the day.
The Bruce beheld its waters
With fixed and wistful eye,
Where calm regret was blending
With bright expectancy ;

And then, with sudden effort,
 Somewhat his arms he raised,
 As one that would have fain embraced
 The things on which he gazed.
 And then on those who held him
 There fell a strange deep thrill—
 For the lifted arms dropped heavily,
 The mighty heart was still!

Hushed was the voice of weeping—
 Mutely did Douglas close
 The eyes of the illustrious dead,
 As if for soft repose;
 And backwards from the couch they drew,
 Calmly and reverently;
 For solemn is the face of death,
 Though full of hope it be!

 LAY THE SECOND.

THE BRUCE'S HEART.

It was Lord James of Douglas
 Set sail across the brine,
 With a warrior band, to seek the land
 Of holy Palestine.
 Stately and gay was his bold array,
 With plume and pennon streaming,
 With the sounding horn at break of day,
 With clustered lances gleaming.
 A nobler knight than the good Lord James,
 In sooth, is seldom seen:

His words, though few, were straight and true
As his sword so bright and keen ;
Dark was his cheek, and dark his eye,
But lit with a fiery glow,
And his form of lofty majesty
Beseemed a king, I trow.

Beneath his vest a silver case,
At a string of silk and gold,
For ever lay, by night and day
Upon his bosom bold ;
That casket none must hope to win
By force or fraudulent art,
For priceless was the wealth within —
It held THE BRUCE'S heart !

In far Dunfermline's towers he lay
In honoured sleep, and there
Had loyal Douglas kneel'd to pay
His vows, and lift his prayer,
When stole along the steeps and glades
The noiseless tread of Night,
And Moonshine with her massy shades
And cold clear lines of light.

And there he laid upon his breast
The heart of the mighty dead,—
Sign that his monarch's last behest
Should be accomplishèd.
That solemn hour, that awful scene,
Bare witness to his vow ;
And soon the waves of ocean green
Danced round his daring prow.

Lord James hath landed in fair Castile,—
 Where, waiting by the sea,
 Alphonso of Spain with a glittering train
 Hath welcomed him royally :
 But woe was in that lovely land ;
 For, from Granada's towers,
 Dark Osmyn's fierce and ruthless band
 Ravaged its myrtle bowers.

The Douglas gazed on the leafy shore,
 He gazed on the ocean blue,
 And the swarthy light in his eye grew bright,
 And his gleaming sword he drew :
 " Wert *thou* at my side, my king," he cried,
 " Thy voice's well-known sounds
 Would bid me aid these Christian knights
 To chase these Paynim hounds !"

Then joy went forth through all the land ;
 And hurrying thousands came
 To see the chief whose valorous hand
 Had won him deathless fame.
 There stood a knight on the monarch's right
 Well proved in bloody wars,
 His face, I trow, from chin to brow,
 Was seamed with ghastly scars.

" Lord Douglas, thou hast been," quoth he,
 " In battles from thy youth ;
 Good faith, I marvel much to see
 Thy manly face so smooth."
 " I thank my God," the Douglas said,
 " Whose favour and whose grace

These hands have ever strengthenèd
Thus to protect my face."

But the clarion's thrilling note was heard,—
And, loosing each his rein,
Their fiery steeds the warriors spurred
Down to the battle-plain ;
So swiftly on their way they went,
So brightly their mail was flashing,
That they might seem a mountain-stream
O'er the edge of a tall cliff dashing.

In full noonday, the fair array
Of turban'd Moslems shone,
Like a cluster strange of gorgeous flowers
Of form and clime unknown ;
But when his arm each lifted, swinging
His keen and twisted blade,
It was like a glittering snake upspringing
Out of the flower's soft shade.

Lord Douglas looked on the crescent proud,
And his Christian heart beat high :
" Charge, countrymen ! " he shouted loud
" For God and Scotland, I ! "
Oh, never did eagle on its prey
Dart with a feller swoop
Than bounded the angry Scots that day
On the Saracen's startled troop !

Like hunted tigers o'er the plain
The Moors they are flying fast—
Like huntsmen true the Scots pursue
With shout and clarion blast :

But track the tiger to his lair,
 And the tiger turns to spring—
 Brave hearts, beware ; for still despair
 Is a feared and powerful thing !

The Moors have wheeled on that fatal field,
 They gather and they stand,
 And the wild long yell of “ Allah hu ! ”
 Is heard on every hand ;
 They are circling about their daring foes
 In a grim and narrowing bound,
 As the walls of a burning jungle close
 The awe-struck traveller round.

The foremost there fell brave St. Clair—
 That saw the Douglas bold,
 And did unloose the heart of Bruce
 From its string of silk and gold ;
 He hurled it through the serried spears,
 And his lifted voice rang high—
 “ Pass to the front, as thou wert wont !
 I follow thee, or die ! ”

The day hath closed on fair Castile,
 The sinking sun gleams red
 On shattered plumes and broken steel,
 And piles of gallant dead ;
 In the centre of that bloody field
 Lord Douglas lay in death,—
 Above him was his own good shield,
 And the Bruce’s heart beneath !

No tears for him ! In Honour’s light,
 As he had lived, he fell.

Good night, thou dauntless soul, good night,
For sure thou sleepest well !
Full hearts and reverent hands had those
Who bare thee on thy bier
Back to the place of thy repose—
Thy Scotland, famed and dear !

A valiant knight the casket bore :
And for that honoured part,
His scutcheon wore for evermore
A padlock and a heart.
They buried the Douglas in St. Bride ;
And the heart of Bruce they laid
In Melrose stately aisles, beside
The altar's sacred shade.

Not mine, with hand profane, to trace
Grey Melrose towers around,—
There is a Presence in the place,
Making it holy ground.
Strewing their snows on that fair spot,
May countless years succeed,
But they sever not the name of Scott
From Melrose and from Tweed !

Grizzel Hume.

Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, afterwards Lord Marchmont, was one of the leaders of the Jerviswood plot in the reign of Charles II. When this conspiracy was discovered, Sir Patrick, having narrowly escaped falling into the hands of those who were sent to arrest him, concealed himself in a vault in the churchyard of Polwarth, and remained there till his enemies had given up seeking for him in that neighbourhood. During his sojourn in this dark and melancholy lurking-place, his daughter Grizzel, a girl about eighteen years old, conveyed provisions to her father every night. She was obliged to go forth alone, at midnight, for this purpose; and great must have been her alarm and anxiety during each of these perilous expeditions; for had chance discovered her to any evil-disposed person, the secret of her father's hiding-place must inevitably have been discovered, and there can be but little doubt that he would have shared the fate of the noble Baillie of Jerviswood, who, having refused to purchase safety by becoming a witness against Lord Russell, suffered death about this time.

Vide SCOTT'S *Tales of a Grandfather*: 2d Series, vol. ii.

WHEN midnight flung o'er earth and sea
 Her solemn veil of gloom,
 All fearless and alone was she,
 The Lady Grizzel Hume,—
 Lighted beneath that sable sky
 By her young heart's fidelity.

With eyes of hope, and peace, and truth,—
 Violets half hid in snow;
 Wearing the glory of her youth
 Upon a cloudless brow;
 Oh, seldom hath the silent night
 Look'd down upon so fair a sight!

She glides along the shadowy copse,
By field, and hill, and tree,
Light as the noiseless dew, that drops
When none can hear nor see ;
Before her home at last she stands,
And lifts the latch with trembling hands.

“ Oh, speak, my child, the night is dark,
Thou comest pale and fast !”

“ I heard the startled watchdog’s bark
As his lonely lair I past,
And hurried on, in fear lest he
Should rouse some lurking enemy.”

“ And couldst thou pass the churchyard drear,
Nor pause in chilly dread ?”

“ Nay, mother, wherefore should I fear
The mute and peaceful dead ?
I only thought, how calm they sleep
Who neither feel, nor fear, nor weep.”

“ Did not thy weary footsteps stray ?
The path was dark and long.”

“ Oh, God was with me on my way,
And so my heart was strong ;
I ever thought the stars did shed
A gracious blessing on my head.”

“ And didst thou see thy father’s face ?” —
(But here she paused to weep.)

“ Ah, mother, yes ! I pray for grace
His sweet behest to keep ;
He bade me labour still to make
Thy spirit happy, for his sake.”

“ Bless thee, my comfort and my child !—
 What said he further ?—speak !”

“ He parted back my hair, and smiled,
 And kiss’d my burning cheek,
 And said I bravely did, and well,
 To visit his forsaken cell.”

“ And look’d he pale ?” “ Ay, somewhat pale,
 But firm and blithe of cheer,
 Like one whose heart could never fail,
 Whose spirit never fear ;
 And calm and stedfastly he spake
 Of things whereat my heart must break.

Yes, changeless was his aspect when
 He said that he might die ;
 But he murmur’d Monmouth’s name, and then
 A tear was in his eye,
 And he brake off, as though in fear
 That sound of woe to speak or hear.

He bade me pray at morn and eve
 That God would make him strong
 Calmly to die, but never leave
 The right, nor love the wrong.
 I pray,—sweet mother, join me thus,—
 God give my father back to us !”

Mother and child knelt mutely there,—
 A sight that angels love ;
 The incense of their tearful prayer
 Rose to the heavens above ;
 And softer sleep, and hopes more bright,
 Came to their troubled hearts that night.

Full oft, when fairer days were come,
Beside a peaceful hearth
That father bless'd his God for HOME,—
The happiest place on earth ;
And bent his head, and smiled to see
His daughter's first-born climb his knee.

Then as the wondering child would gaze
Into the old man's face,
He told of dark and troublous days,
Defeat, despair, disgrace ;
Of Sedgemoor's field — oh, bitter word !
And lone Inchinnan's fatal ford.

And how, through many a weary day,
In want, and woe, and gloom,
A hunted fugitive he lay
The tenant of a tomb,
With one weak girl, so pale and fair,
His ministering spirit there ;

How that bold heart and childlike form
Night after night would brave
The blast, the darkness, and the storm,
To seek his lonely cave—
He paused, to shew with grateful pride
The blushing matron at his side.

Francis the First at Liberty,

AFTER THAT SHAMEFUL IMPRISONMENT WHICH WAS THE RESULT
OF HIS DEFEAT AT PAVIA.

I AM once more a king !
Wave forth my pennon fair !
My foot is on mine own dear soil,
I am free as my native air !
Spring on, my gallant steed,
Thou mayst bound blithely on,
For thou bear'st to his home a warrior freed,
And a king to his crown and throne !

Leap from thy sheath, my sword !
I may wield thee once again ;
I could not brook on thy sheen to look
While writhing in a chain.
I will not bid thee shine
To venge thy master's wrongs,
For, oh, to a heart as light as mine
No bitterness belongs !

These are thy vales, fair France !
Mine, mine, this matchless land !
Dearer than gold, in heaps untold,
Or aught save faith and brand.
The song of thy birds is sweet,
Thy glens seem doubly fair,
And, oh, how my heart leaps forth to meet
Each breath of thy balmy air !

Play on my brow, cool breeze,
For thou wakenest in my heart

High thoughts and generous sympathies,
Which long have slept apart.
It is the voice of France
Which breathes upon me now ;
I will open my breast to thy glad advance,—
Play lightly on my brow !

I am free ! I am free ! I am free !
I may give my full heart way ;
Its fire repress, hath scorch'd my breast,
It pants for the open day.
I am free ! I am free ! I am free !
Oh, is it a dream of joy ?
Or do I stand, on my native land,
And look on mine own blue sky ?

I do, I do ! for when
Did a Spaniard's icy brow
Shine in the light of smiles so bright
As those which meet me now ?
Mine own—ye are all mine own !
I laugh at treason's darts ;
For my people's love is my loftiest throne,
My surest fence their hearts.

And, by mine own true sword,
No wrong shall e'er abase
The soul on which your love is pour'd,
To do that love disgrace !
Still in my changeless breast
Dwells one unsullied spring ;
Free, chained, exalted, or oppress,
My soul is still a king !

The Battle of Antioch.

[The legend on which this ballad is founded is narrated in Mr. James's
Life of Richard Cœur de Lion.]

THE clear eye of morning was cloudless and blue,
And the air was all fresh with the fragrance of dew,
And the cheeks of the Christians with watching were pale ;
But their hearts were as strong as their double-link'd mail.

Round the walls of that city so stately and fair
The Saracen banners were soaring in air ;
And countless and bright was that host of the brave
As sparkles of foam on the storm-cloven wave.

Lo, the gates are flung wide, and the Christian host comes,
Their plumes waving time to the roar of their drums ;
Pale, pale was each cheek, and proud, proud was each eye,
For the souls that spake through them were purposed to die !

Like youth in its buoyancy, joyous and proud,
Was the shining array of the Saracen crowd ;
Like the last hours of manhood, all grief-worn and wan,
But unshaken and fearless, the Christians came on.

They met as the hurricane meeteth the storm
When the fiend of the tempest unveils his dark form,
And the lightnings are marshall'd in heaven's high field,—
Woe, woe for the Christians ! they waver, they yield !

They waver, the weary, the faint, and the few ;
But still bold is their front as their spirits are true ;
And brave were the hearts that had breathed out their life
Ere the banner of Tancred went down in the strife.

Full dark was the paleness which then overspread
The face of their leader, as groaning he said,
Upstretching his arms to the pitiless sky,
“Now God to the rescue, for man can but die!”

And lo, as he speaks, in the distance appears
A band of bright horsemen with star-pointed spears;
Their vesture was white as the sea's snowy surf,
And printless the step of their steeds on the turf.

So mutely they swept o'er the hill's haughty crest,
As the snow rushes down on the river's broad breast,
All noiseless and swift, all resplendent and white,
Like the fires of the north in the loneliness of night.

They turn not, they pause not, they break not their ranks,
But, fast as a torrent o'er-sweeping its banks,
Yet firm as the marching of battle-proved men,
They charge and they shatter the false Saracèn.

That charge who withstandeth? They came like the wind,
And they went as they came—but what left they behind?
In shame and in shrinking, in wounds and in loss,
The Crescent hath fled from the might of the Cross!

The Christians have kneeled 'mid the dying and slain,
And their psalm of thanksgiving soars up from the plain:
“Now, down with the Paynim! his power is o'erthrown,
For God hath been speedy to succour His own!”

The Death of the Captal de Buch.

[The Captal de Buch was truly a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. That fierce and savage insurrection of the populace, called the Jacquerie, was put down by his valour and resolution, almost unassisted. He was the friend and brother in arms of the Black Prince, whose death was communicated to him while languishing in a French prison. On hearing the mournful tidings he refused all comfort, and died within two or three days—one of the few authentic instances on record of death from what is commonly called “a broken heart.”]

THE royal moon shone silver bright
 Upon a prison-grate,
 Where, his chains glancing to her light,
 A lonely captive sate ;
 Strange was it to behold his brow
 So stately and so free,
 For twice three years had witnessed now
 His stern captivity.

No change had past upon his face,
 No dimness on his eye,
 Where shone in glory and in grace
 The soul of chivalry !
 True had he kept his loyal faith,
 And true his knightly sword,
 Nor bribe, nor threat, nor chains, nor death,
 Could turn him from his word.

Slow moves the bolt—his captors come ;
 He starts with burning cheek ;
 “ Oh, say, what news ? what news from home ?
 How fares my chieftain ? Speak ! ”

Their eyes no sympathy evince,
They answer cold and slow,
“Nay, ask not of thy sable prince,
He died six days ago !”

Stern were their hearts and chill with pride ;
But when his face they saw,
They could not choose but turn aside
Their gaze in very awe :
What captive years had failed to do,
At once that instant wrought,
The heart which nothing could subdue,
Was broken—by a *thought* !

His mailless hands awhile he prest
Over his aching eyes,
Until the tumult of his breast
Brake forth in words and sighs :
“ Ah, thou, the gentlest, bravest, first,
Model of friend and foe,
How should the heart refuse to burst
Which hears that thou art low ?

Not on the battle-plain, my chief,
Where knightly banners wave,
And trumpets sound their martial grief
Over the hero's grave ;
Not on thy shield or in thy tent,
With comrades weeping nigh,—
In this thy native element
Thou wert not given to die !

But sickness had its task, to wear
Thy glorious soul away,

And I,—O God!—I was not there
To soothe thy closing day!
With nought to cheer thy wasting pain
Save thine unconquered heart
(*That* all-sufficient to sustain),
So, so didst thou depart!

I lift no prayer for thy repose,
God gives the crown to worth,
And well I know thou art of those
Who earn'd it while on earth;
For me—my pilgrimage is done,
My noon of life is grey,
Mine eyes have seen their guiding sun
Go down while it was day!"

He ceased, and from his side unbound
The sword which still he wore;
He cast it sternly on the ground,
And grasp'd it never more!
He turn'd his face against the wall,
Shut fast his tearless eye,
And, reckless of the words of all,
So did the hero die!

The Choice of the Christian Heroes.

[See Addison's History of the Knights Templars.]

It was the hour of evening prayer,
It was the holy Sabbath night,
Sunset was glowing in the air,
Placid, and calm, and bright ;
When fierce Saladin did call
To his side his warriors all,
And in proud array they wound their way
Up green Tiberias' height.

With fettered hand and weary soul
Each Christian captive followed on,
Submissive to that base control
Till the fair hill was won ;
Oh, what depth of fire suppress
Must have burned in every breast !
For they were the knights of a thousand fights,
Of the Temple and St. John.

They stood and held their very breath,
With rising heart and filling eye,
For the blue sea of Genesareth
Beneath their feet did lie ;
Yon hills are guardians of the shore
Where oft their Saviour trod before ;
And their hands are bound, and the holy ground
Is the prey of Moslemrie !

And lo ! it is the very hour
When on their far, their Christian shore,

Those they best love, from hall and bower
 Wend to the church's door ;
 Full many a heart is lifting prayer
 For them—the lonely captives there !
 The old knights frown, and the young look down,
 For their eyes are running o'er.

Stately and sad, an old knight spake :
 “ Why, tyrants, have ye brought us here ?
 Say, did ye wish to see them *break*,
 The hearts that cannot *fear* ?
 Know, our God will give us might
 Even to look upon this sight.
 My brethren, dry each drooping eye ;
 The foe beholds your tear ! ”

The Moslem chieftain answered him :
 “ Captives, look round ye, as ye stand ;
 Look, ere the twilight closeth dim,
 Upon this lovely land ;
 See how the clouds yon hills enfold,
 Turning their purple into gold ;
 For the sun's last light makes all things bright
 Save you, the captive band.

Is not the earth around ye fair ?
 And do your hearts desire to die,
 Nor breathe once more the gladsome air,
 When morning paints the sky ?
 A precious thing is the light of day,
 And life should not be flung away ;
 Say, would ye be on the green earth free ?
 Pine ye for liberty ?

Free shall ye be, by a sultan's word,
 A word that ne'er was broken yet,
 Take ye but Allah for your Lord,
 And bow to Mahomet.
 Your trusty swords I will restore,
 Your heads shall wear the helm once more,
 By the Moslem band who rule this land
 Ye shall be as brethren met.

Refuse—yon scimiters are keen ;
 A stern and speedy death is near !”
 Full awful were those words, I ween ;
 They thrill'd against the ear !
 What did that true band reply ?
 Every knight kneeled down to die,
 For they looked on the sea of Galilee,
 And one word they answer'd—“ *Here?*”

Here, should the brave deny their God ?
Here, should the true forsake their faith ?
Here, where the living footsteps trod
 Of Him they own'd in death ?
Here, where the silent earth and sea
 Bare witness to the Deity ?”
 There was not a heart would from Christ depart
 By blue Genesareth !

So, one by one, they kneeled and died,
 That band of heroes and of saints,
 And the deep, deep stain of a crimson tide
 The hill's lone greenness taints.
 The hurrying work of death was done
 Ere in the pure wave sank the sun,

And the twilight air was full of prayer,
But not of weak complaints.

Oh, many tears, ye brave and true,
Oh, many tears for those were shed
Whose corpses by the waters blue
Lay piled—unhonoured dead!
Shrined in many a bleeding heart,
Never did their names depart!
And heaven's own light for many a night
Play'd round each sleeping head.

But a purer light than that whose ray
Around their tombless corpses shone,
Was kindled in hearts far away
By the deed which they had done!
And if the warriors' tempted faith
Grew feeble in the hour of death,
"Remember," they cried, "how the Templars died,
And the true knights of St. John!"

The Brethren of Port Royal.

[The Jansenist settlement at Port Royal was composed of men whose demeanour and occupations realised the purest idea of a monastic life that ever presented itself to the mind of a religious enthusiast. The convent was governed by the celebrated Mère Angélique, and among the brethren were to be counted some of the noblest names in France. When the wars of the Fronde first broke out, De Sericour, one of the brethren, and, like many of his companions, formerly a knight and a warrior, cast aside his cowl, and laid hand on his sword. His example was speedily followed by the others; in a few moments the quiet valley was converted into a camp—the peaceful band of monks became a gallant and eager army. Fortifications were commenced; and the work of disciplining forces, not indeed inexperienced, but forgetful, through long disuse, of their former soul-stirring experience, was entrusted to De Sericour. In the midst of these warlike preparations, De Sacy, another of their number, and a relation of the impetuous De Sericour, recalled to the minds of the brethren their vow and sacred profession. In an instant their arms were cast aside, the note of the trumpet was exchanged for the solemn sound of the organ and the plaintive tones of the penitential psalm; and the valley, with its singular inhabitants, was restored to the calm and peace of its original aspect, in a space of time yet shorter than that which had sufficed for the first change.]

UPON St. Mary's night
 Was met a holy band,
 In prayer and fasting to unite
 For their afflicted land;
 The moon shone clear and pale
 Upon the house of prayer,
 And the solemn organ-tones did sail
 Along the stedfast air.

Upon a kneeling crowd
 That silver radiance shone,

With hearts upraised and faces bow'd
 At God's eternal throne ;
 And strange was it to see,
 As ye past their ranks along,
 The difference and the unity
 Of that assembled throng.

Some were in youth's first bloom,
 And some in manhood's prime,
 Some verging on the open tomb,
 And waiting God's good time ;
 From ploughing summer's earth
 Some to those walls were come,
 And the high stamp of noble birth
 Was on the brows of some.

But a holy band they were,—
 One Lord, one faith, one heart,
 A brotherhood of praise and prayer,
 From the vain world apart :
 Beneath war's iron rod
 Their groaning land was cast ;
 But in simple toils, and serving God,
 Their quiet days they past.

Hard must it be to bow
 Beneath that stedfast chain,
 Though no irrevocable vow
 Their willing hearts restrain.
 Seest thou yon kneeler there ?
 Ay, mark him well—the hand
 Now clasp'd in penitential prayer
 Once shook the knightly brand.

Does not that governed eye
Full many a story tell
Of struggle, strife, and victory,
Won in his narrow cell ;
The world's vain lore unlearned,
Its vainer hopes unfelt ?—
But, ah, how the warrior-heart hath burned
Beneath that iron belt !

Long, long he strove to lift
His spirit with the psalm,
Pleading and striving for the gift
Of patience, deep and calm ;
But as upon the air
Those soaring accents float,
There blended with the voice of prayer
One distant trumpet-note.

Like to the purple gloom
Of storm-clouds on the sea,
When earth is silent as the tomb,
And heaven frowns terribly,
Was the darkness that o'erspread
That soldier-hermit's brow :
His eye is proud, his cheek is red—
He's all the warrior now !

Like to the sudden light
Upon those storm-clouds breaking,
When tempest rushes on the night,
And hurricanes are waking,
Was the spirit that *returned*
To his uplifted eye, —

A fire long stifled, but which burned
On its old hearth eagerly.

“Up, up!” he cried, “awake!
Gather for France—for France!
For cowl, and staff, and crosier, take
The helmet and the lance!
We see our country bleed,
We hear the trumpet’s tone,
And how should we need a chief to lead?—
Our hearts shall lead us on!

Our joyous land of France,
Our lovely, our adored,
Shall she—advance, my friends, advance!—
I cannot speak the word.

This is a holy war,
Good angels on us smile;
Soldiers we were, and monks we are,
But Frenchmen all the while!

And our hands are now unbound,
And we all are knights once more,
And the old-forgotten cry shall sound,
‘God and De Sericour!’”

Their hearts took up that cry;
And, like a lion’s roar,
The long aisles echo thunderingly,
“God and De Sericour!”

And the anthem died away,
And the sounds of prayer were lost:
The monks and the beadsmen, where are they?—
Ye see an armèd host!

An armèd host ye see ;
For, swift as light or thought,
Some of its ancient panoply
Each eager hand hath caught.

Lances were glimmering then ;
And, over silvery hair,
Upon the brows of aged men
The helmet sparkled fair ;
But dimm'd with many a stain,
For the rust had eaten through them :
But the spirits were themselves again,
And how should man subdue them ?

They march into the field,
De Sericour the first ;
Oh, as his hand resumed the shield,
Seemed that his heart would burst !
Beneath the moon's pale lamp
War's business was begun,
And the quiet vale became a camp
Before the dawn of sun.

And the work of war went on,
There was hurrying to and fro,
The trumpet gave its cheering tone,
" Set forward on the foe !"
How were their spirits stirred,
All panting to begin !—
But lo, a calm, still voice is heard—
It warneth them of sin !

Of Christian love and hope,
Of their adopted law,

Forbidding strife with strife to cope,
It speaks in holy awe ;
It calls them to submit
To that accustomed yoke,
And to weep that they rejected it,—
It was De Sacy spoke.

Mutely they hear the word,
And mutely all obey ;
Cuirass, and lance, and helm, and sword,
At once are flung away ;
And the noon-tide sun shines bright
Upon an altered scene,
The vale lies placid in its light
As it hath ever been !

Gone—like an April-gleam
When storms are gathering fast !
It is like waking from a dream !
That wondrous change hath past.
And the daily toils went on,
As if they ne'er had ceased,
And the organ with its stately tone
Gave answer to the priest.

Who first did from him cast
The weapon that he wore ?
'Twas he whom man would name the last—
It was De Sericour !
His lofty head is bow'd
'Neath a heavier weight than years,
The eye that was so brightly proud
Is quench'd in sudden tears !

And penitence resumes
Her intermitted sway,
And swift forgetfulness entombs
The deeds of that bright day.
Ah, no ! The *thought* can be
From the deep heart banish'd never ;
'Twas the captive's glimpse of liberty,
Seen once and lost for ever !

Scorn we a heart like his,
At God's own footstool laid ?
Forget not that of stuff like this
Martyrs and saints were made !
But our words are bold and free,
We judge, decide, condemn—
Ah, God forgive us !—what are *we*
That we should sentence *them* ?

The Vow of Cortes.

WORD was brought where Cortes lay
On the shores of Coronzel,
That, pent from the blessed light of day
And the free breath of generous air,
A band of Christians captive were
In the hands of the Indians fell.

Up rose in wrath that leader brave,
And sware by holy cross,
Never to rest by land or wave
Till he had loosed each captive's chain ;
So did his gallant heart disdain
Death, danger, woe, or loss.

Eight weary days and nights he stayed
On the shores of Coronzel ;
Far and wide his messengers strayed,
Oft they went and oft return'd,
But nought of that sad band they learn'd
In the hands of the Indians fell.

And all this while the wind was foul,
The sky was stern and dark,
Dark as a despot's threatening scowl !
But on the ninth bright morning, lo,
The wind blows fair for Mexico,
Wooping each idle bark.

The skies are lucid, clear, and smooth,
As a sleeping infant's cheek,
The breeze is like the voice of youth,
The sea is like a maiden's smile,
Sparkling and gay, yet shy the while,
On lips afraid to speak.

Sighing o'er dreams of fame withheld,
Stood Cortes on the shore,
His fiery heart within him swelled
When he saw his good ships slothfully
Cradled on that rocking sea,—
“Unmoor!” he cried, “unmoor!”

A weary time have we tarried now,
But the fruitless search is o'er”
(Ah, couldst thou thus forget thy vow?)—
“’Twere sin to lose this favouring breeze,
’Twere shame to scorn these courteous seas,
Unmoor, my men, unmoor!”

Merrily rustled each flapping sail
Unfurling as it met
The cool caress of the buoyant gale;
And merrily shouted the seamen brave
As their light barks crested each dancing wave,
And the vow they all forget!

But scarce a league did that gay band sail
When the sky was overcast,
And the good ships reel'd in the clashing hail;
“Courage, my hearts!” quoth Cortes then,
“It shall never be said that Spanish men
Were scared by an adverse blast!”

The heavens grew blacker as he spake,
 And their course they could not keep
 Save for the flashes blue that brake
 Like serpents of fire from the sable sky,
 While they hear the shrill wind's startled cry,
 And the roar of the stormy deep.

But the leader's voice through wind and wave
 Rose calm, and clear, and bold ;
 " Hurrah, my mates ! the storm we brave !
 Stand to your posts like men ! " But hark !
 A cry of terror shakes the bark,
 " There's water in the hold ! "

And to and fro on the slippery deck,
 And up and down the stair,
 Came faces full of woe and wreck,
 With staring eye and whitened lip,
 Hurrying about the fated ship
 In purposeless despair !

" Put back, put back, to Coronzel ! "
 Cried the chief in sudden awe,
 " Put back, put back,—we did not well ! "
 For his mighty heart was humbled now,
 And he bethought him of his vow,
 And the hand of God he saw.

Then labouring in that dreadful sea,
 Through many an hour of fear,
 The groaning bark moved doubtfully—
 Oh, weary men, but glad they were
 When they felt the land-breeze stir their hair,
 And they saw the coast appear !

Bold Cortes stood upon the shore
When morning glimmer'd bright ;
The frenzy of the storm was o'er,
And he saw the calm blue waters lie
Under a cloudless canopy,
Curling in waves of light.

A boat, a boat from Yucatan !
It sprang before the wind ;
And thence there stepp'd a white-hair'd man !
But not from age that hue of snow ;
He walk'd with wavering steps and slow,
Like one whose eyes were blind.

Eager around his path they crowd,
In wild but earnest glee ;
They clasp his hand, they shout aloud ;
For this was one of that sad throng,
Pining 'mid pitiless Indians long,
And now at last set free.

But a wondering, troubled countenance
That white-hair'd stranger's seems,
Like a young child's uncertain glance
When reason dawns upon its heart,
Not understood as yet, but part
Of vague departing dreams.

“ Come I to Christian men ? ” he said,
In eager tones but weak ;
“ Eight years have blanch'd this weary head,
And all the time I have not heard
The sound of one familiar word !
If ye be Christians, speak !

My brethren were around me slain,
And I was spared alone ;
But I have suffer'd want and pain,
A captive's grief, an exile's woe ;
What marvel that this early snow
Upon my head is strown ?

A humble priest of God am I,
And I have kept my vow ;
I saw, in speechless agony,
All that I loved on earth depart,
And pray'd but for a stainless heart :
Thank God, I have it now !”

Around that holy man they stood,
A hush'd and reverent band ;
They wept, those soldiers stern and rude,
As long-unwonted words he spake,
And blest them all for Jesus' sake,
Lifting his wasted hand.

Strangely and long did Cortes gaze
Upon that stranger's face ;
They had been friends in earlier days,
And now his lips half doubting frame
The sounds of a forgotten name,—
Behold how they embrace !

And Cortes seems a boy again,
Life's guilty paths unknown ;
For many a change and many a stain
Have fallen upon him since they met ;
Much hath his hand with blood been wet,
And hard his heart hath grown.

All laden with the sins of years,
He kneels upon the sod ;
He kneels and weeps ! oh, precious tears !
The good man bends beside him there ;
And well we know a righteous prayer
Availeth much with God !

The Enemies.

[The story on which the following ballad is founded is related in Mrs. Jameson's "Lives of Female Sovereigns."]

PART I.

OH, fair was Countess Isadoure,
 The Ladye of Leðn,
 And she unto her highest tower,
 With all her maids, is gone ;
 A veil of lace, in modest grace,
 Was wrapt her brow around ;
 Her vesture fair of satin rare
 Swept on the stony ground.

She spake unto her wardour good :

“ Now, wardour, tell thou me
 How many years thou here hast stood
 To watch the far countree.”

The wardour stout, he straight spake out :

“ Sweet ladye, there have been,
 Since first I clombe this lofty dome,
 Methinks full years fifteen.

And every night, and every morn,
 Noontide and eve the same,
 I still was wont to wind my horn,
 For still a stranger came ;
 Now, twice three days are fully past,
 I gazed both far and wide,
 Nor have I wound a single blast,
 Nor have I aught espyed.”

The ladye dried her pearly tears,
That flowed like summer rain :
“ Ah, wardour, spare a woman’s fears,
Go up yet once again !
Perchance thine eye my lord may spy
Far in the distant west,
For yestereen he should have been
Enfolded to this breast.”

The wardour clombe the weary stair,
And long and closely gazed ;
At last his glad shout rent the air,—
“ Hurrah ! Saint James be praised !
I see a knight—the glimmering light
Just glances from his shield ;
His pace is slow, his plume droops low—
He comes from a foughten field.”

Then joyful was that ladye bright
With measureless content,
And forth to meet the coming knight
In eager haste she went.
“ Now, maidens mine, bring food and wine,
And spread the festal board ;
Soft music bring, rich incense fling,
To welcome back my lord.”

She placed her on a palfrey good,
As well beseemed her state,
And forth she rode in mirthful mood
Down to the castle-gate :
“ Now, maidens, stay your pace, I pray,
And let us gladly wait

Till yonder knight shall here alight
By his own castle-gate."

They had not stayed an hour's brief space
Beneath that sinking sun,
When, lo, with stern and darkened face
That stranger knight came on ;
The ladye saw his brow of awe,
And mark'd his greeting word,
Then veil'd her eyes in wild surprise,
And shriek'd, "'Tis not my lord !"

His mien was sad, his crest defaced,
His mail besprent with gore,
He lighted off his steed in haste,
Hard by the castle-door ;
He flung aside his helm of pride,
He bent his forehead low,
And scarcely knew that war's red dew
Fell trickling from his brow.

" Ah, ladye," (thus the stranger said,)
" Ill tidings must I tell ;
Your lord will surely lose his head
Before the matin bell.
His gallant host are slain and lost,
His friends are all dispersed ;
The cruel Moor is at his door :
Yet is not this the worst !

Pent in Alhama's fort he lies,
Bereft of every hope ;
In vain his utmost strength he tries
With triple force to cope ;

The Moor hath sworn, ere break of morn
 The fortress shall be won,
 And he will hang in ruthless scorn
 Its valiant garrison.

Your lord commends him to your love,
 And prays, in piteous kind,
 That ere the morrow shine above,
 Some succour thou mayst find.
 He bade me tell, that, if he fell,
 His heart's last hope should be—"
 No further word that ladye heard,—
 Down in a swoon sank she!

Then loud her maidens wail and weep,
 And mourn so sad an hour,
 They lift her up in deathful sleep,
 They bear her to her bower ;
 And loyal grief for their good chief
 Spreads far on every part,
 Through all Leòn there is not one
 But bears a heavy heart.

 PART II.

In proud Medina's castle fair
 The rosy wine flows bright,
 For proud Medina's valiant heir
 Brings home his bride to-night.
 Mirth smiles on every lip, and shines
 In every gleaming eye,
 And the sound of merry laughter joins
 With lutes and minstrelsy.

Full many a knight of high degree
 Sate at Medina's board,
 But the morning-star of chivalry
 Was he, their stately lord.
 The haughtiest monarchs bowed them down
 In reverence of his fame,
 And the trumpet-tones of loud renown
 Were weary of his name.

The health passed joyously about
 That table fair and wide,
 And every guest with eager shout
 Gave honour to the bride.
 The old hall rang to their joyous peal;—
 And, lo, on its sides so high,
 The clattering sound of the shaken steel
 Gave faint but fierce reply!

Was that the sound of lance or sword
 'Gainst the mailed hauberk ringing,
 Which circles above the festive board,
 And the lordly banners swinging?
 Lo, every lip forsakes the cup!
 Lo, every knight starts breathless up!
 For wheeling around
 That ancient hall,
 Came the faint, faint sound
 Of a trumpet-call,—
 Sinking and swelling, slow and soft,
 And lost in the night-wind's whistle oft.

It ceased, that low and fitful sound,
 It died on the evening gale,

And the knights they all gazed grimly round,
And the ladies all wax'd pale ;
The baron bold was first to break
The silence of his hall :
“ What may this bode ? ” — ’twas thus he spake —
“ Now rede me, warriors all ! ”

Then up spake Guzman of Mindore —
A holy monk was he —
“ ’Tis the sound, ” quoth he, “ of the coming Moor ;
Oh, let us turn and flee ! ”
Him answer’d straight Sir Leoline,
A true and stalwart knight,
“ ’Tis the sound of the coming Moor, I ween ;
Let us go forth and fight. ”

Then every gauntlet sought its sword
With a quick and friendly greeting,
And a clash arose at the festive board,
But not of goblets meeting.
Up sprang each knight ; like a beam of light
Forth flash’d each trenchant blade,
And the backward start of the quivering sheath
A stirring answer made —
When, lo, on the breeze again was borne
The murmuring note of that distant horn !

And see, where up the hall proceeds
A sad yet stately group ;
A ladye, clad in mourning weeds,
Is foremost of the troop.
Her tearful eyes betray her grief,
Her mien shews her degree ;

And forward to the wondering chief
 She steps right gracefully.

She wrung her hands, and down she kneeled,
 So sorrowful, so fair,
 That heart must have been triply steeled
 That could resist her prayer.
 Scarce have her trembling lips the power
 Their suppliant words to frame,
 She sinks upon the marble floor,
 Murmuring her husband's name !

Her husband's name ! — unwelcome sound
 In proud Medina's ears :
 A wrathful whisper circles round
 The band of knights and peers ;
 From lip to lip is past the word,
 In tones of fierce rebuke,
 " Is it the wife of Cadiz' lord
 Who seeks Medina's duke ? "

Alas, that deadly feud should be
 Between two hearts so brave and free !
 Alas, that long ancestral hate
 Such kindred souls should separate !

Up rose that lady at the word,
 And spake with queenly brow :
 " It is the wife of Cadiz' lord
 Who seeks Medina now !
 I come to tell my husband's plight, —
 A captive doomed is he ;
 And I charge thee as a Christian knight
 Go forth and set him free !

Pent in Alhama's fort he lies,
Bereft of every hope ;
In vain his utmost strength he tries
With triple force to cope ;
The Moor hath sworn ere break of morn
The fortress shall be won,
And he will hang in ruthless scorn
Its valiant garrison.

Then canst thou, wilt thou, not forget
The stormy words when last ye met ?"
" Say rather, will I not contemn
The heart that *could* remember them ?
Fear nothing, gentle ladye,—I
Am slave to love and chivalry.
Let each who keeps his honour bright
And holds his conscience free,
Let each who boasts the name of knight,
Forward and follow me !"
He spake, and shook his flashing sword,
Then darted from the festal board.

Him follow'd Guzman of Mindore
With words of counsel wise :
" Oh, cross not thou thy castle-door
On such a mad emprise !
Recall, recall thy hasty word,
Nor set false Cadiz free !"
But out then spake that generous lord,
" He is mine enemy !"

And never another word spake he,
But on his steed he sprang ;

And forth he rode right joyously,
 As though for his wedding revelry,
 The merry church-bells rang :
 O glorious time, and noble race,
 Where hate to honour thus gave place !

Behind him then his vassals crowd
 In legions bold and bright,
 The prancing of their coursers proud,
 It was a stately sight ;
 And the music of their eager swords,
 In martial fury clashing,
 Was like the ocean-waves' wild hordes
 Over the dark rocks dashing.

Like the torrent plunging from the rock,
 Or the lightning from the skies,
 So rolled the thunder of their shock
 Against their enemies !
 How should a mortal foe resist
 The charge of such a band ?
 They scatter'd like an April mist
 Cleft by the sun-god's hand !

Brief was the battle ! Fast and fierce,
 Ere its first moment parts,
 A thousand Christian falchions pierce
 A thousand Moslem hearts !
 The gates are gained, the walls are cleared,
 The citadel is won,
 That work of victory appeared
 To end ere it begun.

* * * *

Oh, brightly on Alhama's fort
The morning sun was beaming,
Where many a chief of lordly port
Stood in his blue mail gleaming ;
Fair is the scene its towers disclose
In their high banquet-hall ;
But the first embrace of those two foes
Was a fairer sight than all !

Oh, fast through all the Spanish land
That victory was told,
Right gladsome was King Ferdinand,
Right gay his warriors bold ;
From lip to lip the bright tale darts,
All laud the high emprise ;
But the union of those generous hearts
Was dear in God's own eyes !

NOTES.

IN these Notes I do not attempt to give any thing like a narrative of events connected with the subjects of the Ballads, but simply to explain, and that as briefly as possible, such points as may be supposed to require elucidation for my younger readers, in the hope that they may be induced to drink deeply for themselves of the fountains which they are here but invited to taste.

CONQUEST OF ENGLAND.

For the details of this, and of many other Ballads, I am indebted to Miss Strickland's valuable and interesting *Lives of the Queens of England*, to which I beg, once for all, to acknowledge my frequent obligations.

"But traitor Harold," &c.

The melancholy fate of Harold, and his connexion with the "Lady of the Swan Neck," have invested his name with a kind of romantic interest. Nevertheless, he was not undeserving of the epithet here applied to him. He had sworn fealty to William of Normandy as heir of England before the death of Edward the Confessor; independently of which, the claim of the Conqueror to the English throne was at least as legitimate as his own. It will be remembered that the right of a sovereign to will away his kingdom endured to a very late period in English history.

"And their spears shone bright as the stars of night."

It is bad policy to remind my readers of Byron's exquisite line—

"And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea;"

but I suppose that were I to omit such a reference, I should incur the charge of plagiarism.

“’Tis the Duchess Matilda,” &c.

Matilda, daughter to Baldwin V., surnamed the Gentle Earl of Flanders. She was married to William the Conqueror in the year 1052. She was a woman of remarkable beauty, great talents, and strong affections; and the only serious stain upon her character is the unworthy vengeance which she took against Brihtric Meaw, a Saxon noble, to whom she was attached, and by whom she was slighted in early youth. The warm affection between herself and the Conqueror subsisted unimpaired throughout the whole of their wedded life; and history offers us few tales of deeper pathos than that of the rebellion of her first-born, Robert—her own bitter struggles between a mother’s love and a wife’s duty—the touching and passionate reproaches of the injured husband and father—and eventually the death of the heartbroken Matilda, worn out by hopeless sorrow; a fitting end for this domestic tragedy. The reader is again referred to Miss Strickland’s *Lives of the Queens of England*.

THE NEW FOREST.

“*It was the ruthless Conqueror.*”

I am not sorry for this opportunity of exhibiting the darker side of the character of William I., lest it should be supposed by any that I wished to hold him up as a specimen of knightly virtues. His claims to such a character are destroyed by the recklessness and fierceness of his tyranny. That he was sensible, however, of his offences against the requirements of that spirit of chivalry, which, in many instances, it was his pride to obey, is sufficiently shewn by his confessions on his deathbed. He expressed the bitterest remorse for his acts of cruelty and oppression, especially for the desolation of that portion of Hampshire called the New Forest; ordered large sums to be distributed to the poor, and applied to the erection of churches; set at liberty all Saxons whom he had retained in imprisonment; and finally, speaking of the inheritance of the crown of England, declared “that he had so misused that fair and beautiful land, that he dared not appoint a successor to it, but left the disposal of that matter in the hands of God.”

THE KNIGHTING OF COUNT GEOFFREY OF ANJOU.

"That name Count Geoffrey did first assume."

Such is the account of the origin of the name Plantagenet given by French chroniclers. It is, however, a matter of dispute whether the honour belongs to Count Geoffrey.

"The Empress Matilda," &c.

She was the daughter of Henry I. by his wife Matilda of Scotland, and was espoused at the early age of five years to Henry V., emperor of Germany, then forty years old. She was the first female claimant to the sovereignty of England; and from her, according to Miss Strickland, the title of our present gracious Queen is derived. Left a widow in 1125, she was betrothed to Count Geoffrey of Anjou two years afterwards; but their marriage proved most unhappy, having been concluded against her will by the authority of her father. She was haughty, ambitious, and impetuous, though not destitute of talents nor of the warmth of heart which is generally supposed to accompany heat of temper. The following reign, which historians have agreed to call that of Stephen, was almost entirely occupied by a struggle for the crown between that prince and the Empress Matilda, whose son, Henry II., finally succeeded to the throne: thus virtually proving the validity of his mother's claims, though in the singular contract between himself and Stephen he is said to be adopted "as son and successor to that prince by hereditary right."

"Bear thou this blow," &c.

Such were the words which frequently accompanied the *accolade*, or stroke on the shoulder, by which knighthood was conferred. It was customary at the conclusion of the ceremony for the new-made knight, or novice, as he was called, to mount his horse, and shew himself in the streets of the city, amid the shouts of the populace and acclamations of the heralds.

"Two cuisses of steel I give to thee."

It was impossible to include in the ballad an entire list of the gifts presented by King Henry as sponsor to Count Geoffrey, his godson in arms. Miss Strickland thus enumerates them: "A Spanish steed, a steel coat of mail, cuisses of double proof against sword and arrow, spurs of gold, a scutcheon adorned with golden lions, a helmet enriched

with jewels, a lance of ash, with a Poitiers head, and a sword made by Gallard, the most famous of the ancient armourers." The oration here addressed by King Henry to the count is strictly in keeping with the customs of knighthood, which required that the novice should be solemnly instructed in his future duties either by the godfather who dubbed him knight, or the bishop whose office it was to consecrate his sword.

Count Geoffrey was valiant and learned, handsome in person and refined in deportment. Altogether it would be difficult to select a more interesting hero of the ceremony of knighthood.

THE ENGLISH MERCHANT AND THE SARACEN MAID.

It was common for merchants to accompany the great body of Crusaders in their eastern progress, in the hope of opening a trade with the Syrians for many rich and valuable commodities unknown or difficult to be procured in Europe.

" Their first-born son was a priest of power."

I need scarcely say, that the famous Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Henry II., is the personage to whom I here allude. With his name most of my readers must be familiar, although the many conflicting views taken of his character and history render it somewhat difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of either. It would be idle to discuss such questions here, or to attempt to compress, within the narrow limits of these pages, a narrative so full of important and interesting events. For this I must refer my readers to the *History of the Early English Church*, by the Rev. Edward Churton—a work with which I am not myself acquainted, but which is said to contain a detailed and accurate account of the period to which I refer.

EARL STRONGBOW.

The invasion of Ireland by Richard de Clare earl of Pembroke, surnamed Strongbow, in the reign of Henry II., is rather a romance than a history. He was invited to enter the green isle by Dermot, one of its kings, who had been expelled by his fellows for repeated treachery. Strongbow fell in love with Eva, the beautiful daughter

of this worthless prince, married her, and afterwards rapidly conquered the island. The conquest was, of course, attended by many adventures, and interrupted by some reverses, among which I have selected one, which seemed to me peculiarly interesting, as the theme of the present ballad. Fitzstephen was a penniless knight, who, however, attained to such honour by his deeds of prowess during the invasion that he was finally rewarded by the hand of the fair Basilia, sister to the Earl of Pembroke, to whom he had long been hopelessly attached. He is honourably distinguished from his companions by his gentleness and generosity towards his vanquished foes. It is said that the harbour of Dublin was defended by two towers, respectively denominated Castle Hook and Castle Crook. When Earl Strongbow's fleet came in sight of shore, he pronounced the following oracular words, "We will take the city by Hook or by Crook;" and this is supposed to be the origin of the proverbial expression of getting any thing by hook or by crook. It must, however, be observed, that this explanation only substitutes one difficulty for another, as no satisfactory reason is suggested for the singular taste of the Irish in giving two such unaccountable names to their castles.

THE CAPTIVITY OF CŒUR DE LION.

"The lord of France's lovely land."

Philip Augustus, king of France, was one of the principal chiefs of the crusade. Many were the differences which arose between him and the impetuous Richard; not unnaturally, for their characters were as dissimilar as those respectively assumed by the leader of a forlorn hope and the contriver of a mine. In 1191 Philip abandoned the crusade, not without subjecting himself to a bitter reproach from his lion-hearted colleague, who might well be doubtful of receiving a welcome in France when he also was reluctantly compelled to return. "If Philip think," cried the King of England, "that a long residence here will be fatal to him, let him go, and cover his kingdom with shame!"—MACKINTOSH'S *Hist. of England*.

"And Austria's Duke."

Leopold, duke of Austria, whose character, as drawn by Sir W. Scott in his exquisite romance *The Talisman*, exactly corresponds with the brief description here given. He appears to have suffered from an incessant and feverish desire to maintain his own dignity, the claims of which were frequently overlooked or despised by the energetic and

disdainful Richard. At Ascalon, where the duke refused to work in the trenches wherein Cœur de Lion himself laboured like a common soldier, it is said that the angry monarch spurned him with his foot.

THE COMPLAINT OF CŒUR DE LION.

The lays composed by this monarch form no unfavourable specimens of Provençal poetry. They are little known, but ought not to be omitted in our estimate of his character; and are in themselves a sufficient evidence of his vast superiority to the coarse and savage Rufus, to whom Miss Strickland has compared him.

“Thy land, Jerusalem.”

This expression is intended to designate the Holy Land, of which Jerusalem was the capital. Cœur de Lion never obtained entrance within the walls of Jerusalem; and when, to his bitter grief, and in spite of his prodigious efforts, the crusade was finally abandoned, and he was led to the summit of a neighbouring hill to take his first and last look of the Holy City, the high-souled warrior covered his face with his shield to hide the tears which deep sorrow and bitter shame wrung from his lion-heart.

“Specious Burgundy.”

The jealousy of Richard's superior prowess felt by the Duke of Burgundy is supposed to have been chiefly instrumental in procuring the final abandonment of the crusade.

THE LAY OF THE FEARLESS DE COURCY.

Several members of the family of De Courcy accompanied Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, in his invasion of Ireland in 1169-70; and the individual who is the hero of our ballad conquered the province of Ulster.

“The beauteous queen.”

The story of this lovely and high-spirited princess is full of deep and romantic interest. She was betrothed ere she had attained the

age of fifteen years to Hugh of Lusignan, count de la Marche, one of the most renowned warriors of his time. King John, captivated by her surpassing beauty, prevailed on her parents to break off the marriage, and espoused her himself. At first her childish spirit was dazzled and enchanted by the brilliancy of her destiny; but she soon recoiled in horror from the baseness of its partner, and remembered with bitter repentance the gallant knight whom she had been induced to abandon. The indignant Lusignan adopted the cause of Prince Arthur; but was taken prisoner by John, and subjected to the vilest indignities: indeed, it is supposed that his life was only spared at the intreaty of the queen. Afterwards, when, having regained his liberty and proved himself a formidable antagonist, King John was desirous of obtaining him as an ally, the only condition of peace on which he insisted was, that the infant daughter of Isabella should be given to him in marriage. This request, which sufficiently attests the chivalrous devotion felt by Lusignan to the memory of his slighted affections, was granted; but when Isabella, being left a widow at thirty-four, proceeded to deliver her child into his charge, the force of their old and unforgotten attachment revived at once, and the name of the mother was speedily substituted in the bridal contract for that of her daughter. Nearly twenty years of misery and humiliation had not taught Isabella to bridle that ambitious spirit which had so misled her in her days of girlhood; and she eventually died of a broken heart, caused by the shame and scorn brought upon her husband and his family by the rash and rebellious wars in which her pride and vehemence had involved them. "She was a queen," she said, when Lusignan was about to pay homage to his sovereign, "and she scorned to be the wife of any man who must kneel to another."

THE PRINCE AND THE OUTLAW.

"I am Adam de Gordon."

Adam de Gordon was one of the last adherents of Simon de Montfort, whose daring and temporarily successful rebellion rendered troublous a great part of the reign of Henry III. In those days, when vast forests covered many parts of England, it was easy for an outlawed rebel, who was too proud to submit to authority, to conceal himself and live for years in a character strangely compounded of the hermit and the robber.

THE TOURNAMENT.

In this ballad I have attempted to give an accurate description of the ceremonies attendant on a tournament; and I have selected the reign of Edward II. as belonging to the period during which these warlike diversions were at their zenith in England. I cannot touch on this subject without mentioning how much and how frequently this little book has been indebted to Mr. James's interesting historical works.

"When gleaming shields were hanging."

Before the day of tourney it was customary for such knights as intended to appear in the lists, to suspend their shields in the churches or abbeys of the nearest city. Heralds were stationed in the cloisters to hear and answer all questions concerning the knights. If any one, and especially if any female, had a complaint to prefer against one of the combatants, it was necessary to touch with a wand the shield of the offender: the herald then advanced, inquired into and registered the accusation; and if it was subsequently decided by the judge of the field to be well-founded, the culprit was forbidden to appear in the lists. If he was bold enough to venture to the field after this prohibition, he was driven thence by the other knights, who struck him with their truncheons, and chased him from the place with every mark of contempt.

"Sir Piers de Gaveston."

The unworthy and unfortunate favourite of Edward II. Reckless, insolent, and prodigal in the hour of his prosperity, he incurred the bitter hatred of the queen, whom he treated as a child, and the nobles, whom he slighted and ridiculed on every possible occasion. In 1312 he was beheaded, or rather murdered by his enemies, after the mockery of a trial, on the summit of Blacklow Hill, near Warwick. In memory of this outrage the place still bears the name of Gaveshead.

"The scowling gloom of Pembroke."

In this stanza the names of those nobles who afterwards confederated against the life of Gaveston are enumerated. Their jealousy of him was conspicuously manifested at this tournament, and he, on his part, did not fail to meet it in his usual spirit of disdainful scoffing. He called Pembroke, who was lean and sallow of aspect, "Joseph the Jew;" Warwick, who foamed at the mouth when transported by passion, "the wild boar of Ardennes;" and Lancaster, who indulged an

extravagant taste in his dress, "the stage-player." Shortly after this public exhibition of his folly, he was temporarily dismissed at the instance of the queen and the nobility. At parting, Edward bestowed upon him all the jewels which he had received as love-tokens from his fair and royal bride. He was recalled in the fatal year of 1318.

"Fair Queen Isabelle."

Isabelle of France, at that period a beautiful girl of fifteen. Her name has since become synonymous with every thing that is darkest and most hateful in human nature. Faithless beyond the falsest of women, sanguinary and vindictive beyond the sternest of men, she united the worst vices of both sexes, and appears not to have possessed one redeeming virtue of either. Few ideas arise more forcibly on contemplating the splendour of this tournament, than that of the undeveloped germs of crime, horror, and misery which lay unsuspected beneath so fair and bright a surface.

"By the shining rein of a silver chain."

A lady frequently led her warrior's steed to the barrier by a silver chain. Sometimes whole processions of knights were thus conducted to the lists.

"Like walls of glittering armour."

When the two bodies of knights were drawn up in full array opposite to each other, a rope was stretched across the breasts of the horses, and held at either end by a herald. At the signal to charge, the rope was dropped, and the released and impatient steeds at once galloped forwards. The lists were generally marked out by wooden palings, above which were erected galleries for the spectators. The barrier was the entrance to the lists guarded by heralds, whose business it was to admit every knight who was deemed worthy of a place in the tournament.

THE SIX BURGHERS OF CALAIS.

"Then spake Sir Walter Manny."

Sir Walter, or Gaultier de Manny, was a knight of matchless courage and spotless fame, who came over to England when quite a youth in the train of Queen Philippa. His deeds of valour, unstained by any darkening tinge of ferocity, are in themselves a romance, and might fill a volume.

THE DEATH OF KING JAMES I.

James I., having incurred the hatred of his nobles by the unalterable resolution with which he restrained their excesses, and the stern uprightness with which he did justice between those tyrants of the soil and the unfortunate vassals whom they had been accustomed to oppress at their pleasure, was murdered by a band of traitors led by Sir Robert Grahame, at Perth, in the year 1437. So valiantly did he defend himself, that, although entirely unarmed, he succeeded in mastering two of the ruffians who attempted his life, and was only overcome at last by the assault of numbers. Sixteen wounds were found in his breast alone.

“*Let Cameron and Montrose reply!*”

The clan Cameron was distinguished for its devoted loyalty to the unfortunate Charles Edward. At the battle of Culloden many Camerons were slain, and Lochiel, the chief of the clan, was borne from the field dangerously wounded. The name of Montrose at once calls up before our eyes an image of every thing that is high-minded, chivalrous, and loyal. He suffered death by sentence of parliament shortly after the murder of Charles I.

LAY OF SIR WILLIAM WALLACE.

The name and story of Wallace must be familiar as a household word even to the very youngest of my readers. For the particulars of his heroic life I would refer to Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, or to the *Lives of Scottish Worthies* in the “Family Library.”

BRUCE AND DOUGLAS.

———“*undaunted Randolph,
Knight of the Perfect Wreath.*”

Randolph, earl of Murray, one of the bravest of Bruce's followers, between whom and Douglas there was ever a generous rivalry in arms. Immediately before the battle of Bannockburn, the Bruce, perceiving that a body of English cavalry was attempting to force a passage into Stirling on the east, which quarter had been committed to the guardianship of Randolph, addressed that warrior in the words

which have since become almost proverbial: "See, Randolph, a rose has fallen from your chaplet!" The sequel is well known; and the whole story is a beautiful specimen of the gallantry and generosity of Douglas and Randolph.

"And valiant Grey, and stern La Haye."

Sir Andrew Grey was one of the two brave soldiers who, in company with Randolph, led the adventurous band who took Edinburgh Castle by night assault.

Gilbert de la Haye, earl of Errol, was one of Bruce's most faithful adherents, and was created Lord High Constable of Scotland.

"And loyal Lennox there."

Bruce, when flying for his life and in great jeopardy after the battle of Methven, was warmly received by the Earl of Lennox, who lamented with tears that he could not afford him any effectual assistance.

"Methven's field of blood and woes."

The first battle fought by Bruce, after he took arms in behalf of his country, took place at Methven, near Perth, on the 19th of June, 1306, and was a total and disastrous defeat.

"Rachrin's unforgotten coast."

It was in the small and desolate island of Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, that Bruce, a hunted and despairing exile, lay on his couch watching the efforts of a spider, and learning hope from the unwearied perseverance and final success of the insect. The story is too well known for repetition here.

"Arran's isle by shady Clyde."

Bruce landed in the island of Arran on his return to Scotland, and made his presence known to his friends, who were hunting in the woods, by winding a blast on his horn. "Yonder is the king!" cried Douglas, when he heard the sound; "I know him by his manner of blowing."

"The midnight watch."

The story of the beacon on Turnberry Head is familiar to all readers of Sir Walter Scott's poetry—in other words, its notoriety is universal.

"The death of the traitor Comyn."

The Red Comyn was stabbed by Bruce in a burst of indignation at discovering that he was engaged in treasonable correspondence with the English. This fatal act was committed in the church of the Minorites at Dumfries; and it was in answer to Bruce's wild and broken exclamation, as he rushed in remorseful agitation from the desecrated sanctuary, "I doubt I hae slain the red Comyn," that Kirkpatrick uttered the celebrated words, "I will mak sicker;" and, hurrying to the spot, despatched the wounded man with his dagger.

*"Oh, lift me up, my brethren dear,
And let me look on Clyde!"*

The Bruce died in a castle on the banks of the Clyde; and one of his principal amusements, during the last days of his life, was to go out upon the river in a ship.

THE BRUCE'S HEART.

"A valiant knight the casket bore."

Sir Simon Lockhard of Lee, whose name was changed to Lockhart in memory of his guardianship of the Bruce's heart.

GRIZZEL HUME.

"But he marmur'd Monmouth's name," &c.

The Duke of Monmouth, a prince of generous and gentle temper, was the personal friend of Sir Patrick Hume. He was engaged in the Jerviswood plot, and was leader of that more dangerous enterprise organised in London, which cost the lives of Lord Russell and Algernon Sydney. Monmouth was beheaded in the reign of James II.

"His daughter's first-born," &c.

The Lady Grizzel Hume married the son and heir of that Baillie of Jerviswood whom we have before named as chief of the conspiracy in which Sir Patrick Hume was so deeply engaged.

"Sedgemoor's field."

Monmouth was taken prisoner at the battle of Sedgemoor.

“ *Lone Inchinnan’s fatal ford.*”

The Duke of Argyle was commander-in-chief of an army which invaded Scotland about the year 1638, and in which Sir Patrick Hume held a high post. He was taken captive by the enemy’s forces while endeavouring to cross the ford of Inchinnan.

THE CHOICE OF THE CHRISTIAN HEROES.

“ *And heav’n’s own light, for many a night,
Play’d round each sleeping head.*”

The death of these heroic captives occurred exactly as narrated in the ballad. It was believed that beams of light irradiated the unburied corpses during many successive nights. Let not this goodly battalion of the noble army of martyrs be ever forgotten.

THE VOW OF CORTES.

The story on which this ballad is founded is related by Mr. Prescott in his *History of Mexico*, which is throughout rich in romantic incident and picturesque narration. Aguilar, the aged captive whose liberation is here described, is reckoned among the companions of Columbus, whose lives are related in a volume of the “*Family Library*,” supplementary to the biography of that great discoverer.

EXPLANATIONS OF SOME UNUSUAL WORDS

EMPLOYED IN THE PRECEDING PAGES.

BURGHER, or burges.*s*.—A citizen; that is, one who possesses the freedom of a city and the privileges connected therewith. The number and nature of these were, of course, dependent on the terms of the charter by which they were granted, and which was obtained either from the sovereign, or from the chief baron of the district in which the city was situated. The power of bearing arms, and the establishment of independent municipal governments, which continue to this day in the mayors and corporations of our towns, were the principal rights awarded to free cities. The first germ of citizenship in England is probably discoverable in the division of the country under Alfred into hundreds and tythings, in one of which every inhabitant was obliged to enrol himself under penalty of being treated as an outlaw. But in no country did the power of cities rise to so great a height as in Italy, where the most illustrious nobles were often subjected to the jurisdiction of the city near which they dwelt. The freedom of a city was frequently presented to a knight or a nobleman; but though he thus virtually became a burges*s*, it is not customary to apply the name to any person of noble birth, unless engaged in some trade or handicraft. Burghers were first summoned in England to attend parliament, which had hitherto been exclusively composed of nobles and ecclesiastics, by the revolted barons under Henry III. in 1265.

CASQUE.—A helmet; which, in its fullest signification, consisted of the steel cap covering the head, the beaver or beevor beneath the chin, and the movable vizor which defended the face. The beaver was also movable, and could be drawn up at pleasure to cover the chin and meet the lower rim of the vizor. The word beaver is often incorrectly used for vizor, or even for helmet.

CORBEL.—A carved projection from the wall of a building, on which the supports of the roof, or of a parapet beneath the roof, rested.

No ornament which does not form the base of a support receives the name of corbel.

CUIRASS.—A breastplate; to which were generally added the gorget or collar around the throat, the back-piece, and brassets or sleeves, forming altogether a complete vest of steel covering the upper part of the body.

CUISSES.—Steel-plates covering the thighs. The legs were also defended by steel-plates, denominated greaves.

HAUBERK.—A shirt of mail. It extended from the throat to the thigh or knee, and was composed of links of interwoven steel, fitting more or less closely to the body, and so pliant as not to restrain the movements of the wearer. The hauberk was without sleeves; and the name is also applied to a shirt of mail composed of plates.

HERALD.—The office of herald in the times of chivalry comprehended far more than is implied by its modern and popular signification in tale or drama—that of a messenger from one armed power to another. The respect which was entertained for the character amounted almost to reverence: it was a mortal offence to strike a herald, and to assume the office without being really qualified for it, or to counterfeit without in fact possessing it, were crimes worthy of the deepest condemnation. The business of the herald, besides proficiency in that minute science of genealogies and armorial bearings from which the name is derived, was, to receive from every knight a full and particular account of all his exploits, whether successful or inglorious, confirmed by oath. Every warrior on his return from any expedition was bound to make such a report to the heralds, who thus became depositories of all records of fame or of dishonour, and accurate judges of the respective merits of such knights as presented themselves in the field or the tourney. It was the part of the herald to receive all complaints, and answer all questions concerning the warriors who intended to tilt in the lists; it was his part also to greet each knight as he presented himself before the barrier (see notes to the Tournament) with words of courtesy or of compliment, appropriate to the degree of his fame in arms, and to encourage the combatants by cries and shouts as they rode to the attack. Sir Walter Scott notices that the character of herald must have begun to deteriorate from its august dignity by the time of Louis XI. of France—that is to say, towards the middle of the 15th century; because that prince ven-

tured to despatch a counterfeit herald to Edward IV. of England; and the act is recorded by the contemporary historian, Philip des Comines, without any expressions of horror or disgust.

KNIGHT.—In the days of chivalry the dignity of knighthood was conferred only on persons of noble birth, who had previously filled the offices of page and squire in due succession. The manner in which the ceremony was usually performed is described in the ballad of Count Geoffrey of Anjou. The virtues imposed upon a knight, namely, those of piety, courage, self-denial, generosity, honour, loyalty, courtesy, scrupulous adherence to truth, and indefatigable advocacy of the oppressed or helpless, were such as would grace and dignify our own enlightened days; and it may certainly be questioned whether they are more universally practised now than they were of old. At any rate the “few noble,” who may be said to have realised the idea of knighthood—such as Godfrey of Bouillon, the Black Prince, or the Chevalier Bayard—may fearlessly challenge comparison with any members of the list of modern worthies. It is the fashion with many to decry chivalry, as though it were the cause of all those evils of which it was in fact the corrective and remedy. Those historical iconoclasts whose business it is to deface and destroy whatever has of old been held deserving of admiration or reverence, are apt, like their prototypes in the religious world, to erect, in place of the idols which they dethrone, others far less worthy of worship and praise; but so long as utilitarianism stands ready to assume the place of honour, we think that no one possessing any degree of imagination or high-mindedness will ask chivalry to descend from it.

LIEGEMAN.—A subject or dependant. (See **VASSAL**.)

MÊLÉE.—This was the general engagement, hand to hand, in the tournament, as distinguished from the *jousts*, where the knights tilted together in pairs. The word is also applicable to a battle.

MORION.—A helmet. (See **CASQUE**.)

PAGE.—This was the office bestowed on children of noble birth when they had attained the age of seven years, previous to their induction into the duties of an esquire, which generally took place at fourteen. The page seldom resided under the roof of his parents, as it was supposed that their indulgence might materially interfere with the prosecution of his education; but he was generally com-

mitted to the charge of some renowned baron, on whose person it was his business to wait, though he passed the greater part of his time among the females of the family and household. He was sedulously instructed in all martial exercises suitable to his age, and inured to obedience, courtesy of deportment, and indifference to fatigue or hardship. Many of the offices which were included among his duties would now be considered menial; but we may regard his position as somewhat analogous to that of a fag in one of our public schools, who, though he be a duke's son, is not supposed to be disgraced by blacking his master's shoes.

SELLE. — A poetical word for saddle.

SERF. — A slave, the lowest kind of vassal, who was as much the property of his lord as was the soil which he was employed to cultivate, or the herds which he led to pasture.

SQUIRE (or esquire). — This office, though necessarily preliminary to that of knight, was not always conferred on such as were capable of being advanced to the dignity of knighthood. The position of a squire was still that of a servant, his duty being to attend on the person of the knight, to clean his armour, and watch his proceedings in the battle or the tourney, keeping in readiness to fly to his assistance when in imminent danger. The squire was not permitted to engage in the tournament at the same time with his master; but there was a day appointed beforehand on which it was lawful for squires to contend in the lists, and on which they might possibly win their spurs. When a squire had attained the age of twenty-one years, if his conduct had been unimpeachable, and he had won honour in arms, he might demand knighthood from his master as a right. If he encountered a refusal, he might apply to any other knight for the accolade; and unless there were sufficient grounds for rejecting him, he was certain to obtain the boon which he sought.

SUZERAIN. — The feudal lord, or sovereign of a district. The king was suzerain of his whole country; his nobles were all vassals to him, but suzerains to those beneath them.

VASSAL. — One dependent on another; a subject, though not necessarily a serf or slave. A king might be the vassal of another king, if he possessed territories within the dominions of his brother sovereign. He was then bound to do homage for them, to give military

service to his suzerain, and to appear, if summoned, to answer any charge made against him in his character of vassal. His nobles, or great vassals, owed him a similar duty, which they exacted, in turn, from their own dependants. But the effect of this system was to limit the power of the crown, and increase that of the aristocracy; for each one of the great vassals, with whom alone the king came in contact, was, in himself, so powerful as to be capable of resisting his sovereign with good chance of success. The spirit of loyalty, which was an integral part of chivalry, was one great corrective of this evil, as, except in gross cases of oppression on the part of the sovereign, it restricted the probability of rebellion to a few restless and unprincipled barons, and discouraged a league of the vassals against their suzerain. Another check was in time supplied by the progress of citizenship (see BURGHER). The number of free and chartered cities, no longer in a state of vassalage, of course abridged the power of the nobles, while it tended rather to increase that of the monarch, to whom such cities continued to owe fealty and allegiance.

WASSAIL.—Derived from *Wæs heal*, two Saxon words signifying "Health to thee." The wassail-cup, or bowl filled with spiced wine, which was the favourite beverage at the feasts of our Saxon forefathers, received its name from the words pronounced by Rowena, the beautiful daughter of Hengist, when she presented it at a banquet to Prince Vortigern, her future husband. She advanced modestly towards him, and offered him the goblet, saying at the same time, *Wæs heal hlaforð conung*—"Health to thee, my lord king." In its more general application, the word *wassail* signifies merriment or revelry.



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THE BLIND OLD KING.

German

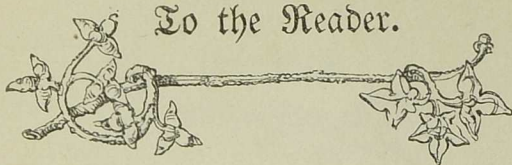
Ballads, Songs, etc.

Comprising Translations from

Schiller, Uhland, Bürger, Goethe, Körner,
Becker, Fouqué, Chamisso,
etc. etc.



To the Reader.



IN sending forth the following little volume, it may be proper to inform the reader that he is to expect a somewhat miscellaneous collection. It comprises, under the general name of *German Ballads and Songs*, 1st, a series of Translations (most of them newly executed) from Schiller and the other authors whose names appear in the table of contents; 2d, a number of Original Pieces, founded on German subjects. Among these are one or two (such as "Odin's Sacrifice") not strictly German, though they are all, it is supposed, sufficiently cognate to justify their insertion in such a volume. A few pieces of a more humorous character than the rest have, for distinction's sake, been thrown together at the end.





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Little Roland.

UHLAND.

IN her cavern of rock Dame Bertha stayed
And wailed her bitter lot;
In open air young Roland played—
Small wail made he, I wot.

“ O Charles! my brother true and great!
Why fled I thus from thee?
For love I left renown and state;
Now frown'st thou sore on me.

O Milon! consort dear and kind!
The flood thy life hath reft!
For love I left all wealth behind—
Now love too me hath left.

Come hither, come hither, my little Rolànd,
Both love and honour now;
Come hither in haste, my little Rolànd,
For solace is none but thou.

Young Roland, to the city go,
And beg a morsel of bread;
And he who shall but a crust bestow,
Crave blessings on his head.”

In his golden hall, high festival
Kept Charles with his paladins bold;
Small rest was then for the serving-men,
With platter and dish of gold.

And loud harps rang, and minstrels sang,
And every heart waxed gay;
But the sound reached not to the dreary spot
Where lonesome Bertha lay.

And round about the outer court
Sat crowds of beggars free,
Who held the feasting braver sport
Than rede and minstrelsy.

The king he gazed the press along
Right through an open door ;
Where a gallant boy, through the thickest throng,
Full manfully him bore.

His garb it was of fourfold hue,
And wondrous fair to see ;
He tarried not by the beggar-crew,
Straight to the hall gazed he.

Into the hall walked little Rolànd,
As 'twere his own abode ;
On a golden dish he laid his hand,
And, silent, forth he strode.

“ What may this mean ? ” our good king thought ;
“ It passes, by my fay ! ”
But since the deed he questioned not,
None else said Roland nay.

There did but pass a little space
Ere back came Roland bold ;
He sped to the king with hasty pace,
And seized his cup of gold.

“ Now out and hold, thou urchin bold ! ”
Our good king loud did cry.
Young Roland still retained his hold,
And dared him with his eye.

The king frowned awhile ; but soon must he smile,
And mirthsome waxed his mood :
“ Thou treadest as bold in our hall of gold
As in thy good greenwood.

Thou bearest a dish from a royal board,
 Like an apple from the tree ;
 Thou fetchest, as though from the streamlet's flow,
 My wine so red to see."

" The peasant girl drinks of the running stream,
 The apple she breaks from the tree ;
 But venison and lamprey my mother beseem,
 And thy wine so red to see."

" Now, an thy mother so noble be
 As thou dost boast, fair boy,
 I ween a gallant train has she,
 And a bower for state and joy.

And who may be sewer to carve at her board,
 And who may bear her cup ?"

" My right hand is sewer to carve at her board,
 My left hand bears her cup."

" And, prithee, who may her warders be ?"

" My little eyen so blue."

" And who may be her minstrel free ?"

" My mouth of the rosy hue."

" A goodly train hath thy fair ladye !

But her livery is strange, I trow ;
 With colours many and bright to see,
 Like the tints of the watery bow."

" In every quarter of the town

Eight boys this arm o'erthrew,
 And they brought to me, for liegeman's fee,
 This coat of the fourfold hue."

“ A gallant page hath thy dame, I ween,
A better there could not be :
I trow she is some beggar-queen,
And open hall keeps she.

Gramercy, 'twere shame so noble a dame
Far from our court should be !
So rise, three ladies ! rise, three knights !
Lead in the dame to me !”

Forth from the hall went little Rolànd,
And bore the golden prize :
At the royal word, three knights from the board
And three bright ladies rise.

The king, he tarried a little space,
Then down the hall gazed he,
And he saw return with speedy pace
His knights and his ladies three.

He fixed his eye, and aloud 'gan cry,
“ Help, heaven, and saints of grace !
In my open court have I made a sport
Of my own imperial race ?

Help, heaven ! My sister Bertha, pale,
In weeds of a pilgrim grey !
Help, heaven ! in this our royal hall,
In beggar's vile array !”

Dame Bertha at his footstool fell,
That ladye meek and mild ;
Still seemed that feud his breast to swell,
He stared on her so wild.

Dame Bertha that look could scantly brook,
No word to speak had she :
Young Roland raised his eyes and gazed,
And hailed his uncle free.

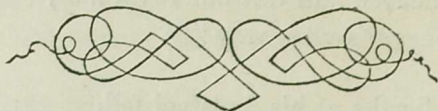
Then spake the king in gentler tone :
“ Rise up, thou sister mine !
For this thy dear and gallant son
Forgiveness shall be thine.”

Dame Bertha rose, o'ercome with joy ;
“ Thanks, brother !” did she say,
“ And this my good and loyal boy
Thy kindness shall repay.

Shall, like his king, uprear his helm
In many a conquering field ;
Shall bear the colours of many a realm
In pennon and on shield.

Shall tear from many a royal board
The gold, with a conqueror's hand ;
Shall raise, to power and wealth restored,
His drooping motherland !”

H. T.



The Diver.

SCHILLER.

“OH, where is the knight or the squire so bold
 To dive 'mid yon billowy din?
 I cast down a cup of the purest gold;
 Lo, how the whirlpool hath sucked it in!
 I grant the prize of that costly cup
 To the venturous hand that shall bear it up.”

The monarch he spake as he proudly stood
 On the cliff's o'erhanging steep,
 And he plunged the cup in Charybdis' flood,
 Into the arms of the endless deep;
 “Now, who is so gallant of heart,” he cried,
 As to venture his life in yon raging tide?”

They listened, that goodly company,
 And were mute both squire and knight;
 For they silently gaze on the wild, wild sea,
 And they dare not strive with the whirlpool's might.
 And the king, for the third time, loudly spake,
 “Will no man dive for his monarch's sake?”

But silently still they gaze and stand,
 Till a gentle page, and bold,
 Stepped lightly forth from the shuddering band,
 And loosed his scarf and his mantle's fold;
 While warriors and ladies, around the place,
 All wondering, look in his fearless face.

And, lo! as he stands on the outermost verge,
 He sees, in the dark sea gushing,
 The struggling waves of the mighty surge,
 From the depths of the muttering whirlpool rushing;

And their sound as the sound of thunder is,
As they leap in their foam from that black abyss.

And it hisses and eddies, and seethes and starts,
As if water and fire were blending,
Till the spray-dashing column to heaven upstarts,
Wave after wave everlastingly sending,
Never exhausted, and never at rest,
Like a new sea sprung from the old sea's breast.

But the terrible storm is at length asleep!
Black, amid snow-white spray,
A fathomless chasm yawneth deep—
Such portal dream we to hell's dark way!
And they see the fierce, wrangling billows now
Drawn down to those hungry depths below.

Then, quick! ere the tempest again awakes,
The youth but kneels to pray,
And a cry of horror from each lip breaks—
He is whirled in the whirling stream away!
And the greedy jaws of the fierce white wave
Mysteriously shut o'er the swimmer brave.

All smooth is the surface; beneath, is heard
A muttering deep and suppressed;
From lip to lip passes the trembling word,
"God speed thee, young spirit, and dauntless breast!"
Then they pause, and they listen right fearfully
To the gathering howls of the hollow sea.

King! if thou cast in thy crown of gold,
And say, "He who wins the gem,
Kingdom and crown for his own shall hold!"
Small were my wish for the diadem.

For how should a living soul reveal
What the howling seas in their womb conceal?

Full many a stately ship hath rushed
Down to yon bubbling wave,
And mast and keel, all shattered and crushed,
Arose from the depths of the deadly grave.
Nearer and nearer that deep sound now
Comes, like a tempest at work below;

And it hisses and eddies, and seethes and starts,
As if water and fire were blending,
Till the spray-dashing column to heaven upstarts,
Wave after wave everlastingly sending,
Whose sound as the sound of thunder is,
When they rush with a roar from their black abyss.

But, see! what shines through the dark flood there,
As a swan's soft plumage white?
An arm and a glittering neck are bare,
They busily move with a swimmer's might:
It is he! and, lo, in his left hand, high,
He waveth the goblet exultingly!

He is breathing deep, he is breathing long,
As heaven's glad ray he hails;
While merrily shout the rejoicing throng,
"He lives, he is here, and the fierce wave quails!
From the depth, where the waters battle and roll,
The brave youth has brought back a living soul!"

And he comes, while the gay troop cluster round,
He bends at his sovereign's feet,
And he gives him the cup, kneeling low on the ground;
And the king hath beckoned his daughter sweet,

And she crowneth the beaker with wine's bright spring,
While the bold youth speaks to the wondering king :

“ Long life to our monarch ! and joy to those
Who breathe in the light of the blushing sky !
It is fearful *there* where the dark wave flows,
Nor should man tempt the gods on high,
Nor ever to seek those sights presume
Which they graciously curtain with night and gloom.

Down, down I shot like a lightning-flash,
When, lo ! from the depth of the rocky ground
Did a thundering torrent to meet me dash,
Like a child's frail top I was spun around,
Powerless and weak ; for how should I fight
With the double stream in its raging might ?

Then God, to whom I bitterly cried,
Displayed, through the driving foamy blast
In the depth of the sea, a rock's bare side,
I grasped the edge—I was safe at last !
And there hung the cup on its coral brow,
Saved from the bottomless depths below !

For the purple darkness of the deep
Lay under my feet like a precipice,
And though here the ear must in deafness sleep,
The eye could look down the sheer abyss,
And see how the depths of those waters dark
Are alive with the dragon, the snake, and the shark.

There, there they clustered in grisly swarms,
Curled up into many a hideous ball ;
The sepia stretching its horrible arms,
And the shapeless hammer, I saw them all ;

And the loathsome dog-fish with threatening teeth,
Hyæna so fierce of the seas beneath.

In horrible consciousness there I stayed,
One soul with feeling and thought endued,
'Mid monsters, afar from all earthly aid,
Alone in that ghastly solitude !
Far, far from the sound of a human tone,
In depths which the sea-snake hath called her own.

And shuddering I thought, ' they are creeping more near,
They uncoil, and they straighten their hundred joints—
They will clutch me soon !'—in the frenzy of fear
I loosed my hold on those coral points.
I was seized by the whirling stream once more,
But it saved me now, for it rose to shore !"

The monarch he marvelled that tale to hear,
And he spake—" The cup is thine ;
Now win me this ring of jewels clear—
See how its gleaming diamonds shine !
Go down yet again, and bring word to me,
What thou findest in the uttermost depths of the sea !"

His daughter she listened in grief and shame,
And with winning tones she spake :
" O father, enough of this terrible game !
Think what he *hath* dared—at thy word—for thy sake !
Or if thou yet longest with quenchless desire,
Twice shall these knights be shamed by a squire ?"

Then quickly the monarch grasped the cup,
And he hurled it down below—
" If once again thou canst bear it up,
The first of my knights I will dub thee now ;

And thou shalt achieve as thy bride this day
The maid who for thee doth so sweetly pray!"

Through his spirit no earthly fire is rushing,
And fearlessly sparkle his eyes,
For he sees how that fair young face is blushing,
He sees how it droops as the bright tint dies—
Burning so costly a prize to win,
For life and for death he plunges in!

Again that groaning?—that low deep sound,
Which heralds the thunder-clash;
With loving looks they are gathering round.
It cometh, it cometh, the wave's wild crash!
Backwards and forwards it rushes and roars,
But, alas! the youth no wave restores!

S. M.

The Song of the Brave Man.

BÜRGER.

THE brave man's praise in song is told
Like bell or organ's echoing tone;
When bravery is the theme, not gold
But song rewards—nor song alone:
Thank God, who prompts the brave man's deed,
And crowns him with his heavenly meed.

The spring-gale swept the southern sea,
And moist o'er fair Italia passed:
As from the wolf the cattle flee,
So fled the clouds before the blast;
It pierced the wood, it scoured the field,
And floods long froze before it yield.

On mountain-summits melts the snow,
And countless cataracts resound ;
An ocean whelms the vales below ;
The gathering stream o'erleaps the mound ;
High dash the waves on every side,
And fearful icebergs choke the tide.

On arch and pillar reared, and made
Of solid stone, above the flood
A bridge across the stream was laid,
And midway rose a small abode ;
Here lived a tollman, child, and wife.
O tollman, tollman, fly for life !

The tempest now more fiercely rang ;
Near and more near its tumult howled.
Upon his roof the tollman sprang,
And gazed upon it as it scowled :
O gracious God, have pity now—
Who, who can hear and save but Thou !

The icebergs meet, and wildly crash
From either shore, now here, now there ;
On every side the waters dash,
And down both arch and pillar tear.
The trembling tollman, child, and wife,
Shrieked louder than the tempest's strife.

The icebergs thundered, fall on fall,
In uproar wild along the shore ;
They burst the bridge's shattered wall,
Pillar by pillar down they bore :
The havoc onward made its way—
"Have mercy, Heaven!" they louder pray.

Aloft, upon the farther brink,
 A crowd stands gazing, great and small;
 They scream and wring their hands, but shrink
 To risk the rescue, one and all.
 The trembling tollman, child, and wife,
 Above the tempest shrieked for life.

When should resound the brave man's fame
 Louder than bell or organ's tone?
 In noblest song we'll give his name,
 And place it there, aloft, alone.
 Destruction is within a span;
 Come to the rescue, thou brave man!

A count of noble race and worth
 Up gallops on his courser bold.
 What in his hand is proffered forth?
 A purse brimful of dazzling gold.
 Two hundred pieces are his prize
 Who now to help the wretched flies!

Where's the brave man will strive to save?
 Is it the count, my song?—O no!
 Although the generous count is brave,
 A braver on this task must go.
 Come forth, brave man, advance with speed;
 Impending ruin speaks thy need.

Higher and higher swells the flood,
 Louder and louder roars the wind,
 Colder and chiller grows the blood:
 Oh, where shall we a saviour find?
 Pillar on pillar, arch and wall,
 In quick succession crash and fall.

Halloo! halloo! oh, who will fly?

The count the tempting prize uprears.
They hear, they shudder, and they sigh;

But among thousands none appears:
In vain the tollman, child, and wife,
Above the tempest shriek for life.

But, see! a humble peasant now

Starts forth, the noble deed to dare;
Noble and lofty is his brow,

Although his garb is coarse and bare;
He heard the boon proclaimed anew,
And saw how near destruction drew,

And boldly, in the name of God,

He leapt into a fishing bark,
And o'er the waves triumphant rode
Through whirlpool, storm, and billow dark;
But, ah! the boat is far too small
At once to bear and save them all.

But thrice through gulfs he toiled along

That might the stoutest heart appal;
And thrice with manly sinews strong

Rowed happily to save them all:
And scarcely were they safe and well
When the last tottering ruin fell.

Who is the brave man?—who is he?

Say on, my song, his name unfold.
And did he risk his life to be

The master of that glittering gold?
Had the proud count ne'er shewed the boon,
Would he have risked his life as soon?

“ Here,” cried the count, “ bold-hearted friend,
 Receive the prize now thine to share,
 And nobly earned !” But list the end.
 The count a lofty soul might bear,
 But higher feelings swelled the breast
 Of the brave man, so meanly drest.

“ My life,” he said, “ shall ne’er be sold
 For sordid pelf—content, though poor :
 But to the tollman give your gold—
 His all is lost—his lot is sore.”
 Thus firmly spoke he, inly cheered,
 Then turned his back, and disappeared.

The brave man’s praise in song is told
 Like bell or organ’s echoing tone ;
 When bravery is the theme, not gold
 But song rewards—nor song alone :
 Thank God, who prompts the brave man’s deed,
 And crowns him with his heavenly meed.

Complaint of the Sick Warrior.

1815.

FOUQUÉ.

Oh, could I grasp my sabre ;
 Oh, could I mount my steed !
 I know each reaper’s labour
 Is worthy of its meed ;
 And merriest sound the lute’s gay strings
 When the clashing sword in the chorus rings.
 Ah, bitter pangs are wrenching
 This feeble breast of mine,

Marring its joy, and quenching
The lights that once did shine ;
Scarce conscious is my heart, in thought
Of the deeds of fame that once it wrought.

Such is God's will ! Submit thee,
For true His judgments are ;
Be strong in peace, and quit thee
As once thou didst in war ;
Thy heart would bound at the battle-cry,
Rushing to meet it exultingly.

Strike now thy lyre, unyielding,
And speak a mighty word !
Even thus, a hero, wielding
His keen-edged spirit-sword,
Still in the van may charge and fight
Against the foe, and for the right.

And if this weapon faileth,
And the charging foe comes near,
God's hand, I know, availeth
This heart to nerve and cheer.
Forth from my darkness I shall break,
And glad, in victory's morn, awake !

Through chance and change, calm shining,
My Saviour is my strength ;
Yet if, in death declining,
This poor heart breaks at length,
Ah, German ladies, good and bright,
Forget not then your faithful knight !

To you he gave his sword, his lyre, his fame,
Oh, speak ye often of your champion's name !

S. M.



Mariam.

By Murg's pure tide, in Gernsbach's groves,
Sad Mariam weeps her kinsmen slain;
Alone the cedar-shade she roves,
The last of all that gallant train.

This morn their onward course they held,
Where in the plain old Strasburg stood,
And passed each issuing stream that swelled
Their native Rhine's expanding flood.

So gilds their course to-morrow's sun,
And lights them safe where Neckar flows;
Well pleased they rest, the labour done,
For which they left their Alpine snows.

Now Rhine's broad waves in moonlight gleam,
But pines o'erhang their secret way ;
Where, Lichtenthal, thy silvery stream
Glides under Baden's turrets grey.

Those turrets grey, that once obeyed
A lofty prince of Zahring's line,
Now robber-chiefs their den have made—
Its lords in unknown durance pine ;

And thence perchance the sons of spoil
That hurry down each moonlit glade,
And spread e'en now the treacherous toil
Beneath the forest's friendly shade.

Ill fared that night the Switzer steel,
Though strong each arm, though bold each breast ;
Stern Glarus' sons the death-pang feel,
And cleft is Uri's mountain-crest.

Sad Mariam roams unfriended forth,
Unmarked she fled that deadly hour,
'Twere better glut their felon wrath
Than droop thus lone in greenwood bower.

She roamed the forest deep and still—
Each cypress-grove has heard her wail ;
Dark Eberstein's pine-mantled hill,
And glassy Murg's delicious dale.

Across the dale still wanders she,
Nor shelter finds, nor sure repose,
Lest by cool grot or greenwood-tree
There lurk unseen her yestern foes.

At length the gentle stream she spied :
Like her, its wave shewed pale and sad,
Though yet broad Rhine's refulgent tide
With day's departing beams was glad.

Gay shone the bank with flowery sheen ;
Ne'er mortal couch such hues confessed ;
Rich foxglove waved the rocks between,
And crispèd fern the upland dressed.

On high the aspin's lofty shade
With youth's false promise glittered still,
And in the treacherous zephyr played,
Till slept the breeze on grove and hill.

And rested there a pensive dove,
As though he watched the quivering sprays :
Can sign of change, and fleeting love,
In him the spells of memory raise ?

Now swift he stoops with fearless flight,
And gives to Mariam's hand a key ;
Then guides direct her wondering sight
Where opes its stores a magic tree.

Within what lacked for food and rest
The maiden saw with glad surprise ;
Her thanks to Mary's Son addressed,
And gave to sleep her weary eyes.

Nor sweeter sleeps, by grove or field,
The hare begirt with many a flower,
The fawn by branching fern concealed,
Than Mariam in her greenwood bower.

And oft she laid her peaceful down,
 And peaceful woke at morn to pray;
 Calm as still evening's vapoury crown
 Her summer hours flew fast away.

And still that dove, when suns sink low,
 On softest wing comes floating by;
 Then leads where sweetest roses blow,
 And seems to court the maiden's eye.

Till spoke the maid, in sportive guise,
 "Thou dove, that glides on gentle wing,
 Come, tell me, why those pensive eyes—
 That voice that never wakes to sing?"

"I thank thee, thank thee, gentle maid,"
 The wondrous dove in answer spake;
 "For nought but virgin-voice could aid,
 And thus my spell-bound silence break.

And wilt thou do for me a deed?"
 "But name that deed, kind dove," she said.
 "Then through the shades of greenwood speed,
 Where heaves yon hill its pine-clad head.

'Tis there, beneath the cypress-shade
 That Eberstein's dark summits own,
 Her horrid lair has Hexa made,
 And guards her cottage-hearth alone.

There enter bold, nor pause, nor speak,
 Nor heed her threat, nor heed her prayer;
 But swift the inmost dwelling seek;
 Nor she to bar thy course will dare.

Within shall meet thy wondering sight
 Of jewelled rings a regal store;
 Nor thou regard their glitter bright,
 But view them swift and silent o'er.

And that which simplest seems, and last,—
 Of virgin gold a modest ring,—
 That hasty snatch, and hold it fast,
 And back the precious treasure bring.”

She's taken straight her silent way,
 On Murg when morn's first radiance played,
 And reached ere evening's shadows grey,
 Dark Eberstein, thy cypress-shade.

Nor paused, save once—her beads to tell;
 Then silent passed the witch's door;
 Nor heeded threat, nor prayer, nor spell,
 But safely reached that jewelled store.

And swift and still as men that dream,
 She cast each glittering gem aside—
 Each gem, whose radiance might beseem
 On nuptial morn a monarch's bride.

Yet vain that simple pledge to seek,
 Which thus the dazzling store conceals;—
 What ring is there, with fingers weak,
 Which Hexa grasps, as forth she steals?

The maid that precious pledge hath seen—
 Hath torn from Hexa's trembling hand;
 Then frightened fled o'er rock and green,
 Till paused her steps on Murg's pure strand.

“ But why delays my tender dove?
For now 'tis evening's wonted hour,
When aye on gentle wing he'd love
With me to sport in greenwood bower.”

Now darker sinks the evening shade,
When as an oak's broad trunk was near,
And 'gainst its rugged back she stayed
Her frame, with toil o'erwhelmed and fear.

Why moves that oak in calmest eve—
Why shake its leafy sprays above?
What meeting boughs the maid receive,
Close grasped as in the arms of love?

That oak, that mid the desert wild
Hung fairest o'er the glassy tide—
That oak is Zahring's princely child;
That maid—he clasps her for his bride.

And forth around his warriors start,
Like him, that summer days had stood,
Enthralled by Hexa's magic art,
The leafy giants of the wood.

Nor his like timid bird again,
So fleet when dewy evening falls;
But home with all his merry men
He hies him to his father's halls.

There's joy to Baden's halls restored;
And Lichtenthal's glad vale resounds,
And hears again its ancient lord
Chase the dun prey with answering hounds.

There, too, some mouldering stones revealed,
 Fast by yon stream with wild flowers dressed,
 Where rent was Glarus' warrior-shield,
 And cleft old Uri's mountain-crest.

R. I. W.

The Count of Habsburg.

SCHILLER.

At holy Aix, in imperial state,
 In a hall of antique fashion,
 The Emperor Rudolph's majesty sate
 At the feast of his coronation.
 The meats were served by the good Rhinegràve;
 Bohemia's prince the wine-cup gave;
 And all the Electors, the Seven,
 Stood round him, their suit and their service to pay,
 As the radiant throne of the monarch of day
 Is begirt by the planets of heaven.

Around, in a gallery high o'er the hall,
 The multitude shouts and rejoices;
 Loud mingled its tones with the clarion's call
 The joyous acclaim of their voices;
 For at length the long murderous struggle was o'er,
 Foul terror and anarchy triumphed no more,
 Injustice was rampant no longer;
 Gone by was the iron control of the spear;
 The meek and the peaceful no more had to fear
 From the turbulent sway of the stronger.

A beaker of gold raised the monarch in air,
 As thus was his sentiment given:

“The pomp is full gorgeous, the feast is spread fair,
 My imperial heart to enliven ;
 Yet miss I the minstrel, whose eloquent lays
 To rapture divinest my bosom could raise,
 Or soothe me with melody tender ;
 From my boyhood was minstrelsy aye my delight ;
 And what I enjoyed and applauded as knight,
 I will not as Cæsar surrender.”

And, lo ! through the circling array of the peers,
 The long-robèd minstrel advancing !
 All silvery white, in the fulness of years,
 The locks o'er his shoulders are glancing.
 “Sweet melody sleeps in the golden strings,
 Of love's sweet guerdon the minstrel sings—
 Of the highest and best is his story,
 That the heart can wish or the sense desire :
 Then say what my Sovereign would please to require
 To grace the high feast of his glory !”

“I bid not the bard,” said the Monarch, and smiled ;
 “No human authority thralls him !
 A mightier than I rules o'er Poesy's child ;
 His king is the impulse that calls him.
 As o'er the dark welkin the hurricane sweeps,
 As wells the clear fount from its earth-hidden deeps,
 Its source and its nature concealing ;
 So the minstrel's lay from within him springs,
 Awakening the powers of mysterious things
 That sleep in the chambers of feeling.”

The bard o'er the chords ran his fingers straightway,
 And blithely launched into his story :
 “To hunt the wild hart o'er the mountains one day
 Forth pricked a bold knight in his glory ;

Him followed his squire with the gear of the chase ;
 And as through a meadow with stately pace

His generous destrier bore him,
 He heard the far sound of a tinkling bell,
 And was ware of a priest who came fast down the dell,
 With the holy Host before him.

Down vaulted the Count from his selle to the ground ;
 Bareheaded, he louted full lowly,

To reverence with Christian obeisance profound

The present Redeemer most holy :
 A brooklet held on through the meadow its course ;
 It was swoll'n by the storms to a cataract's force,

And the steps of the traveller impeded ;
 The priest on the bank laid the wafer aside,
 His sandals in haste from his feet he untied,
 And into the water proceeded.

'What mean'st thou, Sir Priest?' the Count, marvelling, said ;
 'And whither so hastily hieing?'

'I speed, good my lord, to a parting soul's aid,
 To say mass by the bed of the dying ;

I came to the spot where I weened to have crossed,
 But the force of the stream down the torrent had tossed

The bridge I so often have trodden ;
 So, lest a poor soul should unshriven depart,
 With purpose unbent, of determinate heart,
 I fare through the water unshodden.'

The count set him straight on his knightly steed,

To his hand the gay bridle commended,
 And bade him away to the dying make speed,

Nor rest till the shrift he has ended.
 Then, causing his vassal alight from his horse,
 He mounted, and cheerfully followed the course.

Nor brook'd the bold priest to be idle ;
And the morrow, his eye all with gratitude bright,
He brought the good courser again to the knight,
Full modestly led by the bridle.

‘ Now Heaven it forefend !’ said the generous count,
‘ I should ever so impious prove me,
That steed in the chase or the foray to mount,
That bare the great Being above me !
Ne may'st thou retain him for service of thine ;
He is consecrate now to the office divine ;
He is granted to Him, the All-seeing,
From whom I hold honour and temporal wealth,
Whose vassal I am for subsistence and health,
Soul, body, and breathing, and being !’

All rapt into joy, the priest knew but to say,
‘ All glory and blessing attend thee !
And He whom thy piety honours this day,
In honour maintain and defend thee !
A noble gallant art thou, renowned
For chivalrous deeds on Helvetian ground,
The foes of thy fatherland chasing ;
Six daughters thou hast, of high beauty and worth ;
May each lovely maid bring a crown to thy hearth,
Thy latest posterity gracing !’”

In pensive mood sat the Emperor there,
As he mused on the days long departed,
Till at last, as he scanned the old minstrel with care,
The truth on his memory darted ;
That minstrel-priest full soon he knew,
And veiled in the folds of the purple from view

The tears down his cheeks that were rolling ;
 While the multitude gazed on their prince with delight,
 As they owned in their sovereign the generous knight—
 The deed with high rapture extolling.

H. T.

My fatherland.

KÖRNER.

WHERE is the minstrel's fatherland ?
 Where light from a noble spirit flows,
 Where wreaths are twined for beauty's brows,
 And where the strong heart proudly glows
 For the right, unblenched, to stand—
 There *was* my fatherland !

What is the minstrel's fatherland ?
 Now stoops she beneath foreign yokes,
 Now die her sons 'neath ruthless strokes,
 Once she was named the "land of oaks,"
 The free land, the German land—
 Such *was* my fatherland !

Why weeps the minstrel's fatherland ?
 She weeps that, tamed by foreign hordes,
 Her trembling princes sheathe their swords ;
 Weeps for wronged faith and broken words,
 And finds, alas ! no aiding hand—
 Thus weeps my fatherland !

Whom calls the minstrel's fatherland ?
 With strong despair's deep-thundering cries,
 She bids her silent gods arise,
 The champions of her liberties,

Each with his red and rightful hand —
Thus speaks my fatherland !

What wills the minstrel's fatherland ?
She will crush the foes of liberty,
That the bloodhound from her coasts may flee,
She will keep her freeborn children free,
Or bury them, free, beneath the sand —
So wills my fatherland !

And hopes the minstrel's fatherland ?
She hopes, for her true cause's sake ;
Hopes, that her sons at length will wake ;
Hopes, that her God her chains will break ;
Nor shall that God her prayer withstand.
So hopes my fatherland !

S. M.

On the Death of Wilhelm von Roder.

(Major in the Royal Prussian General Staff, slain at Kulm, Aug. 30,
1813.)

FOUQUÉ.

Nor one, perchance, so blithe as he
To the rush of battle rode ;
Nor one that mused so solemnly
On life, and death, and God.

Nor one whose love for child and wife
And earth was strong as his —
And yet so freely gave his life —
A Christian hero this !

Therefore the front of battle grim,
 Cleft helm, and shattered crest,
 Were as God's messengers to him,
 Leading to endless rest.

Good night, dear friend! blest citizen
 Of heaven, thy fittest home.
 Ye who are waking, charge like men;
 Your rest shall also come!

S. M.

Fridolin.

SCHILLER.

A GENTLE youth was Fridolin,
 And, fearing God alway,
 His lady's grace he sought to win
 By labour night and day.
 Courteous was she, and kind and good,
 Yet gladly had he striven
 To please a cold, capricious mood,
 As service due to Heaven.

From first faint dawn of dewy morn
 Till vesper-hour stole on,
 He lived but in his toils for her,
 Nor ever deemed them done;
 And if his lady bade him rest,
 His eye grew wet the while,
 For he deemed his fair devoir transgressed,
 When not for her in toil.

That lady bright his name would raise
 Above her menials all;

From her sweet lips his ceaseless praise
 Did fast and freely fall.
 She held him as no serf, in sooth—
 A mother's heart she felt;
 And on his face of sunny youth
 Her clear eye gladly dwelt.

Thereat, malignant envy working
 The huntsman's heart within,
 Where darksome fiends had long been lurking,
 And evil thoughts of sin,
 He to the count addressed him thus,
 As from the chase they rode
 (The count a man full credulous,
 And hot and stern of mood):

“How is my master free from care!”
 He spake in cunning deep;
 “No poisonous doubts from thee can scare
 The golden wings of sleep!
 Thy noble wife doth meekly wear
 Her virtue as a veil;
 The hand that would to lift it dare,
 In shame must shrink and fail!”

The count he knit his sable brow,
 “Fellow, what means thy tale?
 Build on a woman's faith? I trow
 Not gossamer more frail!
 Lightly she yields to flattering word:
 A firmer trust I hold;
 To woo the wife of Savern's lord,
 Methinks there's none so bold!”

“Thou speakest truth!” dark Robert cried;

“He merits but your scorn:

Fool, in his wild and senseless pride,

And he a vassal born!

Who dares with wanton eye to scan

His lady, all unshamed ——”

“Ha! speak you of a living man?”

The furious count exclaimed.

“Nay, can the tale my lord surprise,

Known to his serving-men?

It pleases you to seek disguise—

I can be silent then!”

“Speak, slave! who dares to love my wife?

Speak, or thou diest, I swear!”

He shook with rage. “I mean thy page,

Him of the yellow hair.

He hath some comeliness of form,”

The crafty knave pursued;

The listening count grew cold and warm,

It curdled his very blood!

“Is’t possible thou didst not see

How he sees none but her,

At table coldly passes thee

To be her minister?

Look on the rhymes he wrote yestreen

To tell her of his love——”

“To tell!” — “Ay, insolent! I ween

He hoped her heart to move;

The gentle countess kept the tale

In mercy from thine ear—

’Tis pity thou shouldst know it now,

For what hast thou to fear?”

Into the wood in fury rode
The count, nor paused before
He reached his furnace high which glowed
With piles of the seething ore :
With busy hand they fed the brand,
His slaves in their ceaseless care,
The wild sparks flew and the bellows blew,
As if rocks were molten there.

The water's might and the fire's strong light
Were strangely here allied,
For the furnace burned, while the millwheel turned
By the strength of the restless tide ;
And night and day they clattered away,
While the hammers still kept time,
Till the iron so cold they shape and mould,
Like a ball of the soft snow-rime.

Two slaves he beckons : " Hear my will !
The man who shall demand
If ye, obedient servants still,
Have done your lord's command ;
Him into yonder furnace cast
Amid the seething ore,
That, crushed to ashes in the blast,
He cross my path no more !"

A grim and a fiendlike merriment
Those savage listeners feel,
For their hearts are like the ore they strike,
Hard as the senseless steel ;
The bellows with eager hands they ply
To kindle the flame's hot breath,
And they make them ready mirthfully
To do the work of death.

Then Robert spake with treacherous art—
 Oh, false of soul was he!

“Tarry not, comrade—up, depart!
 Our lord hath need of thee.”

His hand the count full coldly waves,
 His words forebode not ill,

“Hence to the forge, and ask my slaves
 If they have done my will.”

The page made answer duteously,
 And dight him for the way,

Yet paused in sudden thought—“Hath *she*
 No task for me to-day?”

He seeks the countess—“Lady mine,
 I to the forge repair,

My love and service aye are thine,
 Hast thou no errand there?”

To this, in gracious tones and low,
 Savern’s sweet dame replies,

“Fain would I to the chapel go,
 But sick mine infant lies;

Go thou to mass, dear Fridolin,
 And worship in my place,

And, when thou weepest for thy sin,
 For mine seek also grace!”

Blithe to fulfil her gracious will,
 He hurries forth amain,

But scarce the hamlet’s further bound
 His rapid steps can gain,

When he hears the solemn church-bell ring
 Through the calm air swinging slow,

All pardoned sinners summoning
 To the sacred feast to go.

“ Turn not aside from God’s dear grace,
If in thy path ’tis found !”

He spoke, and sought the holy place,
But all was mute around ;

’Twas harvest—weary man and beast

Toil ’neath the burning sky,

No acolyte attends the priest,

No choral band is nigh.

“ No vain delay hath crossed thy way,
God’s service needs thine aid !”

So thought the ready page, and now

The sacristan he played ;

In stole and cingulum full fair

He robed the priest, and went

The hallowed vessels to prepare

For God’s pure sacrament.

As ministrant, when this was done,

And served in order due,

The book he bore the priest before,

And to the altar drew ;

Now right, now left, he lowly knelt,

Each sign observing well,

When the holy name in the Sanctus came,

Thrice sounded he his bell.

* And when the priest hath bowed to the east,

To the altar and the rood,

Lifting on high for every eye

The great and present God,

The tinkling bell of the sacristan

Announced the awful hour ;

At that low peal, all weeping they kneel,

And worship their Saviour’s power.

With ready will and with rapid skill
 Thus did he play his part,
 Custom and sign of the mass divine,
 He knew them all by heart:
 Nor did he deem the service long,
 Nor weary nor cold grew he,
 Till the priest dismissed the kneeling throng
 With his "Benedicite!"

All things, I trow, he ranges now
 In order meet and due,
 The sanctuariè right heedfully
 He cleansed ere he withdrew;
 With conscience free, in blameless glee,
 Now speeds he forth to go,
 Nor by the way forgets to say
 Twelve aves murmured low.

He sees the spiry smoke-clouds grey,
 And he sees the labourers stand,
 "Hark, friends!" he cries, "did ye obey
 Your noble lord's command?"
 With a grisly grin they pointed within,
 And each this answer gave:
 "The deed it is done, and the guerdon won;
 The count may praise his slave!"

Bearing that ready answer home,
 In breathless haste he flies,
 Afar the count beholds him come,
 And scarcely trusts his eyes:
 "Whence art thou?" "From the forge!" How wild
 The wondering master stares!
 "Upon the way didst thou delay?"
 "Sir, only for my prayers!"

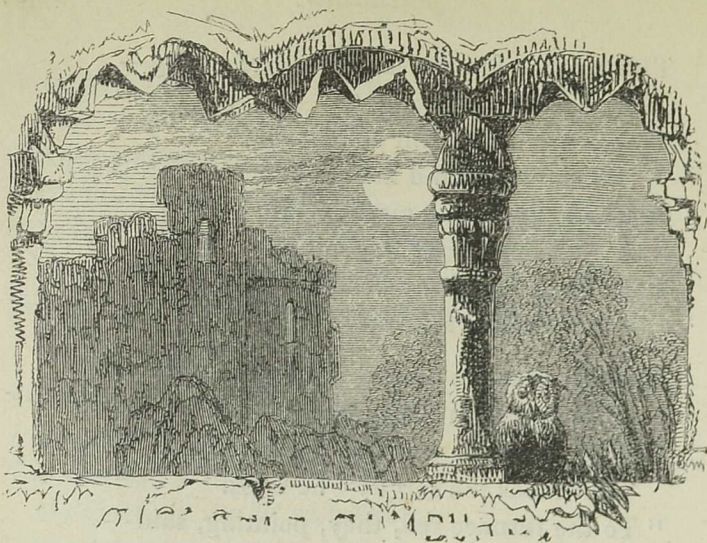
This morn—forgive the blameless wrong—
 My lady dear I sought,
 To her my duties still belong—
 Did she command me aught?
 She bade me to the mass repair;
 A gladsome heart was mine;
 Four times I told my beads in prayer
 For her sweet sake and thine.”

In wild amaze the count must gaze,
 With horror in his eyes;
 “What answer gave each faithless slave
 That tends the forge?” he cries.
 “To the furnace red, they, pointing, said—
 But doubtful seemed the word—
 ‘The deed it is done, and the guerdon won;
 And the tale shall please our lord.’”

The count stood still, an icy chill
 Crept o’er each shaking limb;
 “But Robert to the wood I sent—
 Hast thou not met with him?”
 “No trace of Robert, sir, I saw
 By wood or field or road!”
 “Now,” cried the count in sudden awe,
 “This the hand of God!”

With gentler mien than his wont had been
 His servant’s hand he took,
 And he led him to his wondering wife
 With a changed and thoughtful look.
 “This child—oh, take him to your heart!
 No angel purer is;
 Though I was led by treacherous art,
 God, and His hosts, are his!”

S. M.



The Hero without Fear and without Reproach.

CHR. SCHMID.¹

ALL frowning o'er the valley green,
Girt by dark cliff and dusky wood,
Purpled in evening's light serene,
An ancient mountain-castle stood.
See, how each lofty tower it rears,
All hoary with the pomp of years,
And clad in stately garments made
By the proud oak's ancestral shade.

In days of yore, there dwelt within
A meek and angel-hearted maid,
Untouched by care, unstained by sin,
The gentle lady Adelaide!

¹ From a little work entitled "Blüthen, dem blühenden Alter gewidmet." 1836.

All shadowed by her golden hair,
With eyes so clear, so still, so fair,
She seemed, in loveliness and love,
A herald from the heavens above.

Yet swiftly past that castle's gate,
With trembling steps the wanderer hied,
The land around lay desolate
And tenantless on every side.
By thistles, thorns, and weeds alone
The earth's forsaken ways were sown;
The castle's silent walls, I trow,
Seemed grieving o'er the waste below.

For deep within that vale of woes,
A hideous monster, night and day,
With hungry jaws that never close,
Did fiercely prowl to seek his prey;
Clad was his serpent-form, I ween,
In scaly vest of shining green,
A thousand teeth — O sight of awe! —
Were weapons in the dragon's jaw.

And once the sire of that fair dame
Had spurred his steed, and charged his spear,
(A warrior he of well-earned fame)
To battle with that beast of fear;
But spear, nor sword, nor lance avails
To pierce those adamantine scales;
And, by the monster torn and slain,
He died a gallant death, but vain.

In grief the sorrowing mother sank,
Upon the bed of sickness thrown,

She neither spake, nor ate, nor drank,
 Nor heard her child's consoling tone;
 Beside her couch that maiden bright
 Kept tearful watch by day and night,
 Ready her own young life to give,
 Her drooping mother's to revive.

With parchèd lips and piteous look,
 The dying lady faintly cried:
 "Oh, bring me water from the brook
 That wells beneath our mountain side!"
 Silent in fear her damsels stand,
 No foot is stirred at her command;
 For, ah, beside that wave they know
 Keeps grisly watch their dragon-foe!

The maid defied the natural dread,
 Which made her frail limbs shake and quiver;
 Praying God's blessing on her head,
 She sought that tiny mountain-river:
 A thousand steps of deep descent
 Adown the hill's hard surface went,
 Winding now right, now left, they led
 Down to the streamlet's narrow bed.

The fountain's silver waves spring up
 Above a low rock's hollow rim;
 The maiden plunges deep her cup
 Till the clear streams o'erflow its brim.
 Alas! within a cavern near
 His form the beast did slowly rear,
 And through those dusky shades, the light
 Of his grim eyes gleamed fiery bright.

Forth, forth the furious monster leapt—

She cannot hide, she dares not fly,
But still her stedfast faith she kept,
And, kneeling, raised her prayerful eye;
“ O gracious God, have mercy now !
My mother’s sorrow pity Thou !
Alas, if I be slain, Thou know’st,
Hope for her sinking life is lost !”

But hark ! a sudden sound awoke

Afar, like stifled thunder pealing,
And, pierced as by a lightning-stroke,
She saw the mighty dragon reeling :
A steed’s swift tread that thunder-peal—
That flash a lance of gleaming steel,
Hurled by a knightly hand, she saw
That weapon cleave the dragon’s jaw.

Hah ! how the beast in rage and pain

Struggles and writhes, with failing strength,
And, low on that polluted plain,
Lies in his sable blood at length !
The graceful warrior, tall and slight,
Adorned with golden armour bright,
Now, from his courser leaping, paid
Fair reverence to the wondering maid.

“ God’s blessing on thy fearless brand !”

All trembling thus the damsel spake ;

“ Lo ! from thy brave and generous hand

My life in thankfulness I take !”

“ Nay, thank thy God !” he cried ; “ by Him

Mine arm hath slain this monster grim !

Thy timid prayer with gracious ear

He heard, and winged my conquering spear.”

Beneath a pine-tree's ancient shade
 His faithful steed he fastens now,
 And to the castle leads the maid
 With tranquil and untroubled brow.
 That freshening draught the mother takes,
 Her eye in grateful light awakes,
 The healing waters pour amain
 Life, health, and power through every vein.

" Ah, warrior," thus, in tears, she said,
 " But for thy stalwart arm of force,
 I, hapless lady, now were dead,
 And this fair child a mangled corse !
 Oh, teach me, noble knight, the way
 Thy generous valour to repay !
 Happy were I," she said, and smiled,
 " If thou would'st wed my gentle child."

But wondrous pale the maiden grew —
 Her eyes, so bright with hope before,
 Did sadly gaze through gathering dew
 Upon a star-gemmed ring she wore.
 " To him who gave this ring," she said,
 Sobbing, " though he were cold and dead,
 Till in the silent grave I lie,
 Changeless I keep my constancy."

" O beauteous maiden, weep no more !"
 At once the warrior gently cried,
 " Thine Adelstan shall God restore
 In health and safety to thy side !
 The filial deed thy hand hath done
 For thee this fitting meed hath won ;
 This very night thine eyes shall see
 Him thou hast loved so stedfastly."

Even while he spake, there rose around
The martial trumpet's thrilling strains,
And the castle-bridge, with clashing sound,
Fell sternly in its rattling chains ;
Sir Adelstan, true knight, hath come
From Syrian shore to German home.
Oh, what a meeting-hour was here
To close such scenes of grief and fear !

The knight, whose hand so bold and brave,
Rescued that maid, and saved that mother,
And more—whose noble spirit gave
The faithful damsel to another,
Soon to the spousal altar drew
Beside that pair so fond and true,
And then, with buoyant heart and gay,
Mounted his steed and rode away.

Glad tidings of the dragon's fall
From lip to lip did loudly sound,
They thank their God, those peasants all,
For many a circling mile around :
With tears of joy on every face
The fugitives return apace,
Until round that forsaken spot
Rises full many a cheerful cot.

The hero won his well-earned place
Amid the saints, in death's dread hour ;
And still the peasant seeks his grace,
And, next to God, reveres his power !
In many a church his form is seen
With sword, and shield, and helmet sheen :
Ye know him by his steed of pride,
And by the dragon at his side.

But more than all, that spirit high,
That knight without reproach or fear,
Was to the German chivalry
For ever and for ever dear ;
Still was a father wont to say,
When in his arms his first-born lay,
“ Slight tribute to our hero’s fame,
Lo, GEORGE shall be the infant’s name !”

S. M.



The Fight with the Dragon.

SCHILLER.

WHO comes?—why rushes fast and loud,
 Through lane and street, the hurtling crowd?
 Is Rhodes on fire?—Hurrah!—along,
 Faster and faster, storms the throng!
 High towers a shape in knightly garb—
 Behold the rider and the barb!
 Behind is dragged a wondrous load;
 Beneath what monster groans the road?
 The horrid jaws the crocodile,
 The shape the mightier dragon, shews—
 From man to monster all the while
 The alternate wonder glancing goes.

Shout thousands with a single voice,
 “Behold the dragon, and rejoice!
 Safe roves the herd, and safe the swain!
 Lo! there the slayer—here the slain!
 Full many a breast a gallant life
 Has waged against the ghastly strife,
 And ne'er returned to mortal sight—
 Hurrah, then, for the hero-knight!”
 So to the cloister, where the vowed
 And peerless brethren of St. John
 In conclave sit—that sea-like crowd,
 Wave upon wave, goes thundering on.

High o'er the rest the chief is seen;
 There wends the knight with modest mien;
 Pours through the galleries raised for all,
 Above that hero-council hall,

The crowd; and thus the victor-one :
 " Prince, the knight's duty I have done ;
 The dragon that devoured the land
 Lies slain beneath thy servant's hand !
 Free o'er the pasture rove the flocks,
 And free the idler's steps may stray ;
 And freely o'er the lonely rocks
 The holy pilgrim wends his way."

A lofty look the master gave :
 " Certes," he said, " thy deed is brave ;
 Dread was the danger, dread the fight—
 Bold deeds bring fame to vulgar knight ;
 But say, what sways with holier laws
 The knight who sees in Christ his cause,
 And wears the cross?"—Then every cheek
 Grew pale to hear the master speak ;
 But nobler was the blush that spread
 His face, the victor's of the day,
 As, bending lowly, " Prince," he said,
 " His noblest duty—to obey!"

" And yet that duty, son," replied
 The chief, " methinks thou hast denied ;
 And dared thy sacred sword to wield
 For fame in a forbidden field."
 " Master, thy judgment, howsoe'er
 It lean, till all is told, forbear :
 My law in spirit and in will
 I had no thought but to fulfil ;
 Not rash, as some, did I depart,
 A Christian's blood in vain to shed ;
 But hoped by skill, and strove by art,
 To make my life avenge the dead.

Five of our order, in renown
 The war-gems of our saintly crown,
 The martyr's glory bought with life;
 'Twas then thy law forbade the strife.
 Yet in my heart there gnawed, like fire,
 Proud sorrow, fed with strong desire:
 In the still visions of the night,
 Panting, I fought the fancied fight;
 And when the morrow glimmering came,
 With tales of ravage freshly done,
 The dream remembered, turned to shame,
 That night should dare what day should shun.

And thus my fiery musings ran:
 'What youth has learned should nerve the man;
 How lived the great in days of old,
 Whose fame to time by bards is told—
 Who, heathens though they were, became
 As gods, upborne to heaven by fame?
 How proved they best the hero's worth?
 They chased the monster from the earth—
 They sought the lion in his den—
 They pierced the Cretan's deadly maze—
 Their noble blood gave humble men
 Their happy birthright,—peaceful days.

What?—sacred but against the horde
 Of Mahmoud is the Christian's sword?
 All strife, save one, should he forbear?
 No! earth itself the Christian's care—
 From every ill and every harm
 Man's shield should be the Christian's arm.
 Yet art o'er strength will oft prevail,
 And mind must aid where heart may fail!'

Thus musing, oft I roamed alone
 Where wont the hell-born beast to lie;
 Till sudden light upon me shone,
 And on my hope broke victory!

Then, prince, I sought thee with the prayer
 To breathe once more my native air;
 The license given—the ocean past—
 I reached the shores of home at last.
 Scarce hailed the old belovèd land,
 Than huge, beneath the artist's hand,
 To every hideous feature true,
 The dragon's monster-model grew:
 The dwarfed, deformèd limbs upbore
 The lengthened body's ponderous load;
 The scales the impervious surface wore,
 Like links of burnished harness glowed.

Life-like the huge neck seemed to swell,
 And widely, as some porch to hell,
 You might the horrent jaws survey,
 Griesly, and greeding for their prey;
 Grim fangs an added terror gave,
 Like crags that whiten through a cave;
 The very tongue a sword in seeming;
 The deep-sunk eyes in sparkles gleaming;
 Where the vast body ends, succeed
 The serpent-spires around it rolled.
 Woe, woe to rider; woe to steed,
 Whom coils as fearful e'er enfold!

All to the awful life was done—
 The very hue, so ghastly, won—
 The grey, dull tint:—the labour ceased,
 It stood—half reptile and half beast!

And now began the mimic chase :
 Two dogs I sought, of noblest race,
 Fierce, nimble, fleet, and wont to scorn
 The wild bull's wrath and levelled horn ;
 These, docile to my cheering cry,
 I trained to bound, and rend, and spring ;
 Now round the monster-shape to fly,
 Now to the monster-shape to cling !

And where their gripe the best assails,
 The belly left unsheathed in scales,
 I taught the dexterous hounds to hang,
 And find the spot to fix the fang ;
 Whilst I, with lance and mailèd garb,
 Launched on the beast mine Arab barb.
 From purest race that Arab came,
 And steeds, like men, are fired by fame.
 Beneath the spur he chafes to rage :
 Onwards we ride in full career—
 I seem, in truth, the war to wage—
 The monster reels beneath my spear !

Albeit when first the destrier¹ eyed
 The laidly thing, it swerved aside,
 Snorted and reared ; and even they,
 The fierce hounds, shrank with startled bay ;
 I ceased not, till, by custom bold,
 After three tedious moons were told,
 Both barb and hounds were trained—nay, more,
 Fierce for the fight—then left the shore !
 Three days have fled since I pressed
 (Returned at length) this welcome soil,

¹ War-horse.

Nor once would lay my limbs to rest,
 Till wrought the glorious crowning toil.

For much it moved my soul to know
 The unslack'ning curse of that grim foe,
 Fresh rent, men's bones lay bleached and bare
 Around the hell-worm's swampy lair;
 And pity nerved me into steel.
 Advice?—I had a heart to feel,
 And strength to dare! So, to the deed:
 I called my squires, bestrode my steed,
 And, with my stalwart hounds, and by
 Lone secret paths, we gaily go
 Unseen—at least by human eye—
 Against a worse than human foe!

Thou know'st the sharp rock, steep and hoar?
 The abyss?—the chapel glimmering o'er?
 Built by the fearless master's hand,
 The fane looks down on all the land.
 Humble and mean that house of prayer,
 Yet God hath shrined a wonder there:
 Mother and Child, to whom of old
 The three kings knelt with gifts, behold!
 By three times thirty steps the shrine
 The pilgrim gains; and faint, and dim,
 And dizzy with the height, divine
 Strength on the sudden springs to him.

Yawns wide within that holy steep
 A mighty cavern dark and deep,
 By blessed sunbeam never lit,
 Rank fetid swamps engirdle it;
 And there by night, and there by day,
 Ever at watch the fiend-worm lay,

Holding the hell of its abode
Fast by the hallowed house of God.
And when the pilgrim gladly weened
 His feet had found the healing way,
Forth from its ambush rushed the fiend,
 And down to darkness dragged the prey.

With solemn soul that solemn height
I elomb, ere yet I sought the fight;
Kneeling before the cross within,
My heart, confessing, cleared its sin.
Then, as befits the Christian knight,
I donned the spotless surplice white,
And by the altar grasped the spear:
So down I strode with conscience clear,
Bade my leal squires afar the deed,
 By death or conquest crowned, await—
Leapt lightly on my lithesome steed,
 And gave to God his soldier's fate!

Before me wide the marshes lay—
Started the hounds with sudden bay—
Aghast the swerving charger slanting
Snorted, then stood abrupt and panting:
For curlèd there in coilèd fold,
The unutterable beast behold,
Lazily basking in the sun!
Forth sprang the dogs—the fight's begun!
But, lo, the hounds in cowering fly
 Before the mighty poison-breath;
A yell, most like the jackal's cry,
 Howled, mingling with that wind of death.

No halt—I gave one cheering sound,
Lustily springs each dauntless hound;

Swift as the dauntless hounds advance,
 Whirringly skirrs my stalwart lance—
 Whirringly skirrs; and from the scale
 Bounds as a reed aslant the mail.
 Onward!—but no!—the craven steed
 Shrinks from his lord in that dread need;
 Smitten and scared before that eye
 Of basilisk horror, and that blast
 Of death, it only seeks to fly—
 And half the mighty hope is past!

A moment, and to earth I leapt;
 Swift from its sheath the falchion swept;
 Swift on the rock-like mail it plied—
 The rock-like mail the sword defied:
 The monster lashed its mighty coil—
 Down hurled—behold me on the soil!
 Behold the hell-jaws gaping wide—
 When, lo, they bound—the flesh is found;
 Upon the scaleless parts they spring;
 Springs either hound—the flesh is found—
 It roars; the blood-dogs cleave and cling!

No time to foil its fastening foes—
 Light, as it writhed, I sprang, and rose;
 The all-unguarded place explored,
 Up to the hilt I plunged the sword—
 Buried one instant in the blood—
 The next, upsprang the bubbling flood!
 The next, one vastness spread the plain,
 Crushed down—the victor with the slain;
 And all was dark, and on the ground
 My life, suspended, lost the sun,
 Till waking—lo, my squires around—
 And the dead foe!—my tale is done.”

Then burst, as from a common breast,
 The eager laud so long supprest;
 A thousand voices, choral blending,
 Up to the vaulted dome ascending;
 From groined roof and bannered wall,
 Invisible echoes answering all:
 The very brethren, grave and high,
 Forget their state, and join the cry.
 "With laurel-wreaths his brow be crowned,
 Let throng to throng his triumph tell;
 Hail him, all Rhodes!"—the master frowned,
 And raised his hand, and silence fell.

"Well," said that solemn voice, "thy hand
 From the wild beast hath freed the land.
 An idol to the people be!
 A foe, our order frowns on thee!
 For in thy heart, superb and vain,
 A hell-worm laidlier than the slain,
 To discord which engenders death,
 Poisons each thought with baleful breath!
 That hell-worm is the stubborn will.

Oh, what were man and nations worth,
 If each his own desire fulfil,
 And law be banished from the earth?

Valour the heathen gives to story;
Obedience is the Christian's glory:
 And on that soil our Saviour-God
 As the meek low-born mortal trod,
 We the apostle-knights were sworn
 To laws thy daring laughs to scorn;
 Not *fame*, but *duty* to fulfil,
 Our noblest offering—man's wild will.

Vain-glory doth thy soul betray ;
 Begone—thy conquest is thy loss :
 No breast too haughty to obey
 Is worthy of the Christian's cross !"

From their cold awe the crowds awaken,
 As with some storm the halls are shaken ;
 The noble brethren plead for grace—
 Mute stands the doomed, with downward face ;
 And mutely loosened from its band
 The badge, and kissed the master's hand,
 And meekly turned him to depart :
 A moist eye followed, "To my heart
 Come back, my son !" the master cries.
 "Thy grace a harder fight obtains ;
 When valour risks the Christian's prize,
 Lo, how humility regains !"

The Minstrel.

GOETHE.

"WHAT strain is that without our walls
 Which from the bridge we hear ?
 Again, more closely, in our halls
 Its sounds must glad our ear !"—
 The monarch spake, a page obeyed ;
 The page returned ; the monarch said,
 "Lead hither yon old minstrel !"

"Hail, noble masters—each true knight !
 Hail *you* too, lovely dames !
 Heavens, what a galaxy of light !
 What tongue can tell your names !

Such throngs of valour, blent with grace,
Dazzle mine eyes—nor time nor place
Sufficing for my wonder.”

His face the minstrel stooped to hide,
And struck his fullest chords;
Their laps the blushing beauties eyed;
Up proudly gazed the lords.
The monarch, flattered by the strain,
Proffered a costly golden chain,
As largesse for his harping.

“The chain of gold befits not me;
Some helm ’twill better grace
To which, ’mid shouts of victory,
The foe their spears abase:
Or hang it on that brow of care,—
Its burden let your chancellor wear
Among his other burdens.

I sing but as the bird which sings
From yonder leafy bower;
The verse which from the bosom springs
Pays its own precious dower.
Yet, might I urge it, one request—
Some wine, your oldest and your best,
In that pure, golden goblet.”

They filled the cup; he quaffed it up,—
“O draught divinely soothing!
Right well befall the bounteous hall
Where gifts like this are nothing!
Remember me when cups flow high;
Thank heaven devoutly then as I
Now thank you for this bumper.”



The Flower's Maiden.

UHLAND.

“ Good morrow to thee, Mary ! right early art thou laden !
Love hath not made thee slothful, thou true and stedfast
maiden !

Ay, if in three brief days, methinks, thy task of work be
done,
I shall no longer have the heart to part thee from my son."

It was a wealthy farmer spake, it was a maiden listened :
Oh, how her loving bosom swelled, and how her full eye
glistened !

New life is in her limbs, her hand outdoes her comrades all,
See how she wields the scythe, and see how fast the full
crops fall !

And when the noon grows sultry, and the weary peasants
wend
To sleep in pleasant thickets, and o'er cooling streams to
bend ;
Still are the humming-bees at work beneath that burning
sky,
And Mary, diligent as they, works on unceasingly.

The sun hath sunk, the evening bell gives gentle summons
home ;
" Enough," her neighbours cry, " enough ! come, Mary,
prithee come !"
Shepherds, and flocks, and husbandmen, pass homeward
through the dew,
But Mary only whets her scythe and goes to work anew.

And now the dews are thickening, the moon and stars are
bright,
Sweet are the new-mown furrows, and sweet the songs of
night ;
But Mary lies not down to rest, and stands not still to
hear,
The rustling of her ceaseless scythe is music to her ear.

Even thus from morn till evening, even thus from eve to
 morn,
 She toils, by strong love nourished, by happy hope up-
 borne;
 Till when the third day's sun arose, the labour was com-
 plete,
 And there stood Mary weeping, for joy so strange and
 sweet.

“ Good morrow to thee, Mary! How now?—the task is
 done!
 Lo, for such matchless industry, rich guerdon shall be
 won;
 But for the wedding—nay indeed—my words were only
 jest;
 How foolish and how credulous we find a lover's breast!”

He spake and went his way, and there the hapless maid
 stood still,
 Her weary limbs they shook, they sank, her heart grew
 stiff and chill;
 Speech, sense, and feeling, like a cloud, did from her spirit
 pass,
 And there they found her lying upon the new-mown grass!

And thus a dumb and death-like life for years the maiden
 led,
 A drop of fragrant honey was all her daily bread.
 Oh, make her grave in pleasant shades, where softest
 flow'rets grow,
 For such a loving heart as hers is seldom found below!

Consolation.

FOUQUÉ.

WHEN through Life's avenue so dark and cold
 Downward, and ever down, the steps are tending,
 Behold,

Hope's gentle accents cheer us in descending :

“ Ah, be not sad ! ah, do not weep !

Ere thou lay thee down to sleep

The sleep of death,

Thou shalt feel anew Spring's kindly dew

And the May-wind's fragrant breath.”

So didst thou speak, dear voice ; so didst thou dream ?

The brightness of Life's wave hath ebb'd away ! *
 †

A gleam

Of light shines feebly on my darksome way,

But 'tis across the grave so chill !

Cheat me no more — endure I will

As best I can ;

Suffer and fight, and strive with might,

Even as becomes a man.

I am companioned by mine own sweet strain,

Like a clear-shining lamp to light my feet ;

Again,

Echoing through German bosoms, strong but sweet,

It cheers my spirit's lonely way :

Ah, yes, and I can pray, can pray

Rejoicingly !

For my misdeeds, if Jesus pleads,

Who then condemneth me ?

S. M.

The Knight of Toggenburg.

SCHILLER.

“A SISTER’S love,” said the damsel bright,
“I yield thee, pure and true;
But ask me no tenderer thought, Sir Knight,
Sith further ye may not woo.

I would calmly see thee come to me,
I would calmly see thee part;
But thy silent glance’s tearful plea,
It never may reach my heart.”

* The knight he listened in speechless grief,
For word he could not say;
The maiden he prest to his bleeding breast,
And tore himself away.

He has called his menée so brave and free
From sturdy Switzerland;
And they march to the Holy Sepulchre—
The knight and his red-cross band.

And many a deed of knightly praise
That gallant’s arm has wrought;
And his plummy crest waved high o’er the rest
Where foremost the foemen fought.

And before the Toggenburger’s name
The Paynim learned to quail;
But the conqueror’s heart from his grief to part
No conquest might avail.

A year he bore, but he bears no more ;
No rest his soul has found :
He leaves his host on the Syrian coast,
To speed to his native ground.

He sees a bark on Joppa's strand,
And she stands out for the sea ;
And home he hastes to the best-loved land
Where wons his dear ladye.

A pilgrim stands at her castle-gate —
The warder his note has heard,
And to the guest who asks his fate,
Returns the thunder-word :

“ She has ta'en the veil, thy ladye-love ;
She is Heaven's betrothed one now :
No longer, I ween, than fair yestreen,
She plighted the holy vow.”

The knight left the halls of his sires for aye ;
He recked not of knightly deed,
Ne of his brand and launcégaye,
Ne of his faithful steed.

Down from the Toggenburg he came,
Unheeded and unknown,
And veiled his noble form and name
In haircloth weed alone.

He built him a bower by the minster-tower
Whereas his ladye lay,
Where, half amid the lindens hid,
Looked forth the dark abbaye :

And there he waited from morning rays
 Till eve fell dusk and chill ;
 With silent hope in his wistful gaze,
 He sate alone and still.

He gazed upon the cloister near ;
 His anxious eye would hang
 On the window of his ladye dear,
 Until the lattice rang ;

Till there she stood, that ladye bright—
 Till that loved vision smiled,
 Glancing along the dale in light,
 So calm, so angel-mild.

Then blithe he laid him down to rest,
 And slept the hours away,
 Rejoicing with contented breast,
 In hope of early day.

For many a day, for many a year,
 Withouten plaint or pang,
 Still gazed he on the window dear,
 Until the lattice rang ;

And there she stood, that ladye bright—
 And that loved vision smiled,
 Glancing along the dale in light,
 So calm, so angel-mild.

And there he sate, one morning-tide,
 A corse so pale and chill ;
 But the stiff cold gaze in its lifeless glaze
 Was turned to the window still.

The Toy of the Giant's Child.

CHAMISSO.

BURG Niedeck is a mountain in Alsace, high and strong,
Where once a noble castle stood—the giants held it long;
Its very ruins now are lost, its site is waste and lone,
And if ye seek for giants there, they are all dead and gone.

The giant's daughter once came forth the castle-gate be-
fore,

And played, with all a child's delight, beside her father's
door;

Then sauntering down the precipice, the girl did gladly go,
To see, perchance, how matters went in the little world
below.

With few and easy steps she passed the mountain and the
wood;

At length near Haslach, at the place where mankind
dwelt, she stood;

And many a town and village fair, and many a field so
green,

Before her wondering eyes appeared, a strange and curious
scene.

And as she gazed, in wonder lost, on all the scene around,
She saw a peasant at her feet, a-tilling of the ground;
The little creature crawled about so slowly here and there,
And, lighted by the morning sun, his plough shone bright
and fair.

“ Oh, pretty plaything !” cried the child, “ I'll take thee
home with me ;”

Then with her infant hands she spread her kerchief on her
knee,

And cradling horse, and man, and plough, all gently on
her arm,
She bore them home with cautious steps, afraid to do them
harm!

She hastes with joyous steps and quick (we know what
children are),

And spying soon her father out, she shouted from afar:
“O father, dearest father, such a plaything I have found,
I never saw so fair a one on our own mountain ground.”

Her father sat at table then, and drank his wine so mild,
And smiling with a parent's smile, he asks the happy
child,

“What struggling creature hast thou brought so carefully
to me?

Thou leap'st for very joy, my girl; come, open, let us
see.”

She opes her kerchief carefully, and gladly you may deem,
And shews her eager sire the plough, the peasant, and his
team;

And when she'd placed before his sight the new-found
pretty toy,

She clasped her hands, and screamed aloud, and cried for
very joy.

But her father looked quite seriously, and shaking slow
his head,

“What hast thou brought me home, my child?—this is
no toy,” he said;

“Go, take it quickly back again, and put it down below;
The peasant is no plaything, girl,—how could'st thou
think him so?”

So go, without a sigh or sob, and do my will," he said ;
 " For know, without the peasant, girl, we none of us had
 bread :

'Tis from the peasant's hardy stock the race of giants are ;
 The peasant is no plaything, child — no — God forbid he
 were !"

G. F. RICHARDSON.

The Blind King.

UHLAND.

THE Northmen's troop, in a warrior-group,
 They stand by the sea so green —
 What doth he there, in his silver hair,
 The blind old king, I ween ?
 He lifteth his voice with a cry of woe,
 As he leans on his oaken wand,
 And his words o'er the wave in thunder go
 To the echoing isle beyond.

" Give back my child from thy rocky wild !"
 He cries in grief and rage ;
 " Her harp-notes clear, her voice so dear,
 Were the treasures of mine age !
 From the merry dance on the green sea-shore
 Thou hast snatched the maid away ;
 To thee 'tis shame for evermore,
 And it bows these tresses grey !"

Forth from his cave came the robber brave,
 Tall, fierce, and wild to see ;
 He swung o'er his head his Hun-sword red,
 And his clanging shield struck he :

“Thou hast warders enow, sir king, I trow;
Why stayed not they my hand?
Was there never a knight for her to fight
In all thy valorous land?”

But the Northmen around they uttered no sound,
Nor forth from the ranks stepped one,
Till the sightless king spake sorrowing,
“Am I then quite alone?”

But his youngest son his hand hath clasped
With a loving clasp and warm,
“Oh, suffer me thy knight to be!
There is strength in this right arm!”

“O son! thy foe hath a giant’s might,
No man resists his brand;
Yet I feel that thou hast manhood now
By the pressure of thy hand!
Take here mine ancient sword of proof!
If evil be thy fate,
May the yawning sea soon close on me,
Aged and desolate!”

Hark to the splash of the clear sea-spray
As the light bark scatters it round!
The sightless king stands listening,
His Northmen breathe no sound;
Till through that splash was heard the clash
Of steel, from the island’s shore,
And the cry of foes who in battle close,
And the sullen echo’s roar.

“Tell, tell to me, what sights ye see,”
Cried the king in joy and fear;

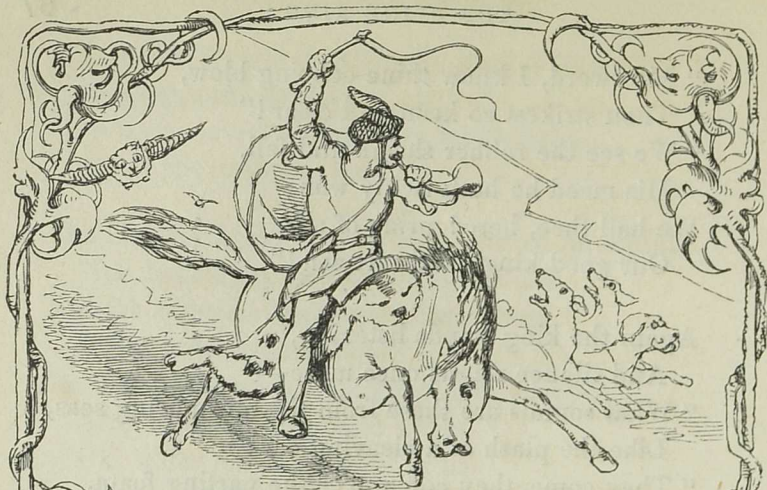
“ My sword, I know thine echoing blow,
Thou strikest so keen and clear !”
“ We see the robber shrink and fall,
His meed he hath richly won ;
We hail thee, hero ! pride of all,
Our good king’s stalwart son !”

Again the king stands listening,
And silence reigns once more —
“ What sounds are these from the murmuring seas,
Like the plash of a cleaving oar ?”
“ They come, they come, o’er the parting foam,
Thy son in his arms of pride,
And Gunilda fair in her sunbright hair,
Thy daughter, at his side !”

“ Welcome !” that blind old man did cry
From his rock above the wave ;
“ Now will mine age be an age of joy,
My grave an honoured grave !
Son ! lay the sword which struck so true
Beside me where I lie ;
Gunilda free, sing thou for me
The death-hymn’s melody !”

S. M.





The Wild Huntsman.

BÜRGER.

THE Rhinegrave winds his horn—"Away!
To horse! On foot! The chase—hurrah!"
Up leaps his steed with eager neigh,
On comes his train with loud huzza;
The hounds uncoupled rush at speed,
Clattering o'er bush, and brake, and mead.

In Sunday brightness, still and fair,
Yon church uplifts her stately tower;
The solemn bell that calls to prayer
Peals deeply forth the wonted hour,
While far and lovely, soft and slow,
The reverent anthem soundeth low.

Right o'er the hallowed path they ride,
With wild halloo and ringing shout;
Behold! behold! from either side
A single horseman joins the rout;

A fiery roan the left — the right
A graceful steed of silver white.

Who were those riders? Well I guess,
But know not, nor may utter more ;
A face of springtide gentleness
The youthful right-hand horseman wore ;
Tawny and fierce, the other's eye
Shot lightnings like an angry sky.

“ Right welcome !” cried the hunter-lord,
“ To the noble chase right welcome be !
No sport can earth or heaven afford
Of fairer fame or merrier glee.”
He clapped his hands with joyous cry,
And shook his hunting-cap on high.

“ Ill blends thy horn, so wild and vain ” —
Thus did the right-hand horseman say —
“ With solemn bell and choral strain ;
Return, forbear the chase to-day !
Oh, let thy better self persuade !
Be not by evil thoughts betrayed !”

“ The chase, my noble lord, the chase !”
Eager the left-hand horseman cried ;
“ Let the dull bells ring, and the pale monks sing,
’Tis to the merry chase we ride !
Of me, come learn thou princely lore,
And list yon prater's words no more.”

“ Well spoken, rider frank and free !
A hero to my taste art thou ;
Let him who loves not veneriè
Mutter his prayers and knit his brow ;

Out, pious fool! I hold my way,
Let it offend thee as it may."

Hurrah! hurrah! o'er dale and hill,
O'er field and plain, away they ride;
But, right and left, those horsemen still
Keep closely at the baron's side.
Up leaps from yonder sheltering crag
A stag of ten—a milk-white stag.

Louder the chief his horn doth wind,
Faster on foot, on horse, they fly;
Lo, one by one, before, behind,
The panting vassals sink and die!
"Ay, sink to hell! A baron's glee
Must ne'er be marred for such as ye!"

Lo, to a field of yellow corn
The trembling stag for refuge flies;
And see, a peasant, poor and worn,
Pleads to the earl in piteous guise:
"Have mercy, noble baron! Spare
The hope of want, the fruit of care!"

Forward the right-hand horseman spurred,
Mildly to check and gently warn;
The left, with many a scoffing word,
Urges the deed of ruthless scorn;
The baron spurns that gentle pleading,
And follows where the left is leading.

"Hence, dog!" in tones of furious wrath
The earl disdains the peasant's woe;
"Hence, or I hew thee from my path!
Hurrah, companions! forward, ho!"

In token that the truth he hears,
Rattle your whips about his ears !”

’Tis said, ’tis done! On, on they dash,
That lowly fence the baron leapt ;
Behind, with clanging horn and crash,
Hound, horse, and man, in fury swept ;
Hound, horse, and man, the full ears crushing,
Till steamed the field beneath their rushing.

Scared by that coming storm, the stag
Flies, breathless, over waving meads,
Through field and plain, o’er vale and crag,
Pursued, but yet unreached, he speeds,
And, bootless cunning! strives to hide
’Mid gentle flocks in pastures wide.

But up and down, through wood and plain,
And to and fro, through plain and wood,
The hurrying hounds upon him gain,
Scenting his steps, athirst for blood ;
Their rage the trembling shepherd sees,
And sues for pity on his knees.

“ Mercy, oh, mercy! Not in sport
Make poor and peaceful flocks your prey!
The hapless widow’s sole support.
Ah, pause and think! Ah, do not slay!
Spare to the poor their little all—
Mercy, oh, mercy! hear my call!”

Forward the right-hand horseman spurr’d,
In soothing tones to check and warn ;
The left, with mocking laugh and word,
Urges the deed of ruthless scorn ;

The baron spurns that gentle pleading,
And follows where the left is leading.

“ Out of my path, rash cur ! Away !
I would that in yon quivering kine
My dogs could make thyself their prey,
And yonder beldame wife of thine :
Think ye my heart would then be loath
Up to yon heavens to send ye both ? ”

“ Hurrah, companions ! Forward there !
Ho, tantara ! hark away ! ”
Then every hound did raging tear
With cruel teeth the nearest prey ;
Beneath the bleeding shepherd’s eye
His bleeding flock are rent, and die.

Scarcely, with ever-slackening pace,
The stag escapes that murderous crowd ;
With blood and foam on flank and face,
He seeks a thicket’s midnight shroud ;
Deep in the darkness of the wood
A hermit’s forest-temple stood.

With crack of whip and clang of horn,
With crashing hoofs that shake the air,
With cries of mirth and shouts of scorn,
The wild troop follow even there :
Lo, from his prayers aroused, they see
The hermit come, with gentle plea.

“ Cease, nor pollute this sacred shade !
Cease, nor profane this hallowed time !
God’s creature cries to Him for aid,
And calls for vengeance on thy crime.

For the last time, be warned ! Forbear,
Or dread destruction and despair !”

Forward the right-hand horseman spurred,
With anxious eyes to check and warn ;
The left, with many a scoffing word,
Urges the deed of ruthless scorn :
Woe, woe ! he spurns that gentle pleading,
And follows where the left is leading.

“ Destruction ? let it fall !” he cries ;
“ Dreamest thou my heart to overawe ?
If yonder cell were heaven or hell,
To me ’twould matter not a straw :
Away, thou fool ! God’s wrath or thine
Shall never baffle sport of mine.

My whip I swing, my horn I wind ;
Hurrah, companions ! Forward there !”
Ha !—cell before, and train behind,
At once have melted into air ;
And shout, and yell, and hunter’s call,
Sink into deathlike silence all.

The trembling baron gazes round ;
His whip he swings—no echo wakes ;
He shouts, and cannot hear a sound ;
He winds—his horn no answer makes.
On either flank his steed he spurs :
In vain—it neither starts nor stirs.

And gradual darkness o’er him now
Closes, and closes like a grave ;
’Tis silence all, save deep and low
A murmur like a distant wave :

And, lo, a thunder-voice on high
Proclaims his sentence terribly.

“Thou mad blasphemer! pause, attend:
God, man, and beast have felt thy wrongs;
The groans of thine oppressed ascend
To Him to whom revenge belongs;
Accused, condemned, and sentenced, see
Grim Vengeance lights her torch for thee.

Fly, sinner, fly! and from this hour,
Till weary time itself shall close,
By hell's inexorable power
Be chased: a warning dread to those
Who scorn, at Pleasure's sinful word,
Alike God's creatures and their Lord.”

Lo, swarthy yellow lightning breaks
Through the soft shadow of the trees:
In marrow, bone, and nerve he quakes;
He seems to burn, to thrill, to freeze;
Cold Horror frowns before—behind
Hisses the storm and shrieks the wind.

Still raved the blast and roared the storm,
When from the womb of earth arose
A sable hand of giant form:
The fingers open—lo, they close!
See, see, his quivering neck they clench!
See, see, his head around they wrench!

Beneath him yawns a fiery flood,
Green, blue, and red; its waves of flame
Swarming with hell's terrific brood
Of shapes too horrible to name.

Lo, in an instant, from the deep,
At once a thousand hell-hounds leap!

Through woods and fields, away, away,
Howling aloud, the sinner flew;
But through the whole wide world, for aye,
Those baying dogs of hell pursue:
By day in earth's deep caves; by night
High in the air they hold their flight.

Still backward stares his pallid face,
While forward speeds each shuddering limb;
He sees those monsters of the chase,
Athirst for blood, and gaunt and grim,
The greedy jaws for him that gape,
And the fiend-huntsman's awful shape.

This is that chase, which sweeps aloft,
And shall till breaks the day of doom,
Startling the lonely wanderer oft
When night hath closed and all is gloom;
Seen by full many a huntsman pale,
Whose lips must never breathe the tale.



A Sigh.

FOUQUÉ.

A soft heart, and a soul of fire,
 Panting to do and dare,
 Some gentle skill to sweep the lyre—
 These gifts my portion were.

Paths, dreamed of in youth's happy days,
 Unclosed to manhood's tread ;
 Well pleased my white-haired parents gaze
 Down on their child's young head !

Alas, how soon on Joy's bright morn
 Grief's midnight closeth grey !
 The cold wise world hath turned in scorn
 From my soft heart away.

The warrior-sword in fragments lies ;
 And, if the lyre I sound,
 Woe's me ! no loving hearts or eyes
 Kindle or melt around !

True, glorious bays afar they twine
 To crown the minstrel's worth ;
 For one poor wreath I would resign
 All coronets on earth !

The wreath of love—for me it bloomed,
 From me it faded fast.
 In vain ! My lone heart droops, consumed
 By yearnings for the past.

S. M.

The German Rhine.

NICHOLAUS BECKER.

THEY never shall subdue it,
 The German Rhine's free stream!
 Though, fierce as vultures, to it
 They flock with hungry scream:
 While yet it calmly weareth
 Its green and tranquil vest;
 While yet the wanderer heareth
 One oar upon its breast.

They never shall o'ercome it,
 Our glorious German Rhine!
 While yet our hearts name from it
 The fresh and fiery wine:
 While proud its rocks are raising
 Their iron brows of might;
 While airy domes are gazing
 Into its mirror bright.

They never shall subdue it,
 The German Rhine, the free!
 While youths and maidens woo it,
 Pledge of their vows to be:
 While yet one fish below it
 Sports gladsomely along;
 Or on its shores one poet
 Can breathe a deathless song.

They never shall subdue it,
 Our German Rhine's free stream!
 Though, fierce as vultures, to it
 They flock with hungry scream:

No! they shall win it never,
 Our German Rhine's free wave,
 Till it hath closed for ever
 O'er the last German's grave!

S. M.

The *Might of Poesy.*

SCHILLER.

(Ein Regenstrom aus Felsenrissen.)

A TORRENT from the mountain-steeps,
 With conquering strength it thunders down,
 The tall rock crashes where it leaps,
 And the mighty oaks are overthrown :
 Thrilling with strange delightful fears,
 The wanderer views its bursting course ;
 The roaring of the flood he hears,
 But sees not its mysterious source :
 Thus, from a fount no eye may see,
 Spring forth the streams of Poesy.

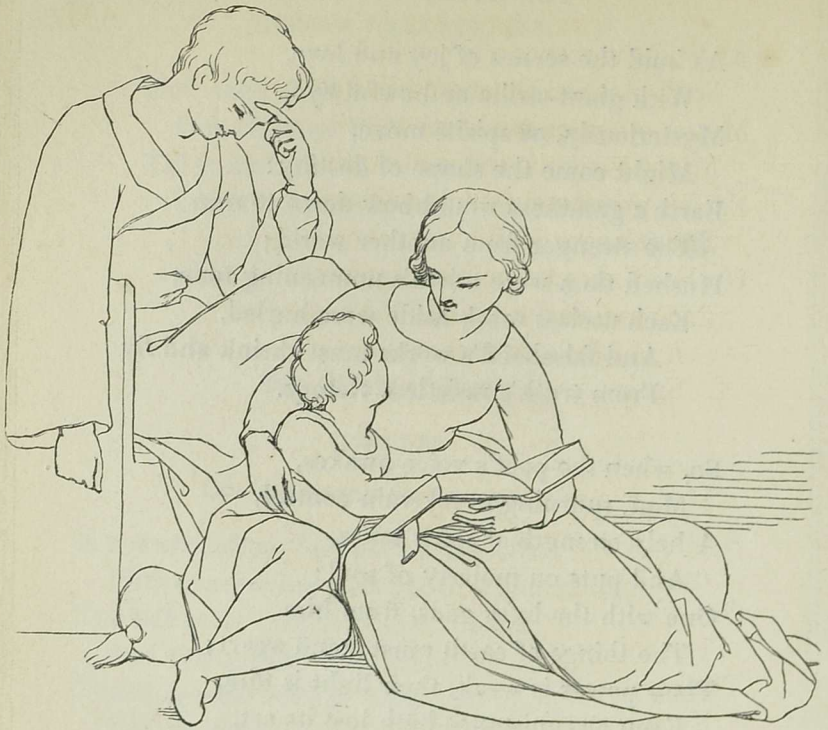
Bound to that awful Three, whose hands
 The web of life in silence wind,
 The poet's music who withstands?
 Who dares the poet's spell unbind?
 As God's ambassador he wields
 His staff, and thrilling hearts submit ;
 He lifts it to heaven's starry fields,
 In death's cold wave he plunges it ;
 Half-sad, half-sportive, now he sways
 The scale where tremulous feeling plays.

As 'mid the scenes of joy and love,
With giant-stride and awful eye,
Mysteriously, as spirits move,
Might come the shape of destiny:
Earth's greatness would bow down to own
The stranger from another world;
Hushed then were mirth's unmeaning tone,
Each useless mask aside were hurled,
And falsehood's works must shrink and fly
From truth's resistless victory.

So, when the poet's voice awakes,
Man, spurning every vain control,
A holy strength of spirit takes,
And puts on majesty of soul:
One with the lofty gods, from him
The things of earth must stand apart;
Their power is weak, their light is dim,
Even circumstance hath lost its art,
And while those magic tones delay,
Each troublous feeling melts away.

As, after sorrow deep and vain,
Estrangement long, and grief apart,
While flow repentant tears like rain,
The child springs to its mother's heart;
Even so, once more, the truant stands
In the unforgotten vales of youth,
The cold, cold laws of distant lands
Are changed for bliss, and peace, and truth;
On Nature's warm and faithful breast
He lies, and nought shall break his rest!

S. M.



The Illustrated Bible.

FREILIGRATH.

THOU old and timeworn volume,
Thou friend of childhood's age,
How frequently dear hands for me
Have turned the pictured page !
How oft, his sports forgetting,
The gazing boy was borne
With joyous heart, by thy sweet art,
To tread the land of morn !*

* *Das Morgenland*, "the land of morning." By this beautiful expression the Germans designate the East.

Thou didst fling wide the portals
Of many a distant zone ;
As in a glass I saw them pass,
Faces and forms unknown !
For a new world I thank thee !—
The camel wandering free,
The desert calm, and the stately palm,
And the Bedouin's tent, I see.

And thou didst bring them near me,
Hero, and saint, and sage,
Whose deeds were told by the seers of old
On the book of books' dread page :
And the fair and bride-like maidens
Recorded in thy lines—
Well could I trace each form of grace
Amid thy rich designs.

And I saw the hoary patriarchs
Of old and simple days,
An angel-band, on either hand,
Kept watch upon their ways ;
I saw their meek herds drinking
By fount or river-shore,
When mute I stood, in thoughtful mood,
Thine open page before.

Methinks I see thee lying
Upon thy well-known chair ;
Mine eager gaze once more surveys
The scenes unfolded there ;
As, years ago, I saw them
With wonder and delight,
Each form renews its faded hues,
Fresh, beautiful, and bright.

Again I see them twining
In ceaseless shapes of change ;
Bright and grotesque each arabesque,
Mazy, and wild, and strange ;
Each fair design encircling
In varied shape and dress,
A blossom now, and then a bough,
But never meaningless.

As in old times, entreating,
I seek my mother's knee,
That she may teach the name of each,
And what their meanings be !
I learn, for every picture,
A text, a verse, a psalm ;
With tranquil smile, my sire the while
Watches, well pleased, and calm.

Ye seem but as a fable,
O days that are gone by !
That Bible old, with clasps of gold—
That young believing eye—
Those loved and loving parents—
That childhood blithe and gay—
That calm content, so innocent—
All, all, are past away !

S. M.



The Oaks.

KÖRNER.

'Tis evening ; mute are day's discordant sounds ;
 The sun's last parting rays are streaming red ;
 How full, how bold the heart within me bounds,
 As here, beneath your aged arms outspread,
 Ye old true witnesses of times long fled,
 In meditative mood I listless lie !
 Life's freshest verdure tricks each ancient head,
 And mighty forms of mighty worlds gone by
 Stand round us, robed in your magnificent majesty.

Full many a noble heart hath Time laid low,
 And early death full oft hath beauty died ;
 Yet still departing evening's farewell glow
 Decks your rich leafy crests with wonted pride.
 Fate from your trunks, innocuous and defied,
 Retires, and Time, indignant, threats in vain,
 While from your swinging boughs re-echoing wide
 Floats to my ear no inarticulate strain,
 " All that is great must still in death unscathed remain."

And ye in death have stood ! and fresh and gay
 Stands each bold form in green attire arrayed ;
 No pilgrim roves beside the forest-way
 But he must first repose him in your shade ;
 And when your leaves beneath stern Autumn fade,
 A precious, duteous offering still they bring ;
 A pledge that, yet, unharmed and undecayed,
 Even from their children's death more flourishing,
 Your honours shall revive beneath reviving Spring.

Fair portraiture of ancient German faith,
 As better times beheld it! Dauntless then,
 In bold and happy carelessness of death,
 Built his firm state the freeborn citizen!
 But what avails it to lament me, when
 The common tribulation^{*} all deplore?
 O Germany, thou goodliest land of men!
 Thy fields still blossom, but thy fame is o'er—
 Thy oaks yet stand, but thou art fallen for evermore!

H. T.

The Emperor Otho the Third's Lament.

O EARTH, receive the weary,
 Whom life can glad no more,
 Whose pilgrim-journey dreary
 Ends on the far south shore.
 I tread the brink eternal
 That parts the soul from clay,
 And twenty seasons vernal
 Have passed me by for aye.
 Lorn, orphaned, strickenhearted,
 I see my day-dreams all,
 Even as they rose, departed—
 The reins of empire fall.
 Some hand less weak and idle,
 From these seven hills of Rome
 The mighty realm must bridle,
 Even to the North Sea foam.
 Yet shame and sorrow haunt me
 Even on the spirit-coast,
 And past transgressions daunt me,
 And chase the pallid ghost.

In vain with deprecation
 I stem the malison;
 To plead my condemnation
 Crescentius comes, and John.

Yet no! my prayers repenting
 Have moved those spirits stern,
 And to my sire, relenting,
 They grant me to return,
 For whom so vainly, dearly,
 I asked in boyish years,
 And o'er whose grave so early
 I've wept a world of tears.

Lo, round God's throne attending,
 The guardians of Almayne!
 Lo, forth my grandsire bending!
 Hail, too, my sire again!
 And while Matilda o'er me
 Extends her gentle hands,
 In deepest thought, before me,
 Entrancèd Henry stands.

Blind Fortune's princely dower,
 How idle shews it now!
 What though that toy of power
 Adorned my baby-brow?
 How frail the gauds, and brittle,
 Which then so vast I thought;
 O world, thou art—how little!
 O Rome, thou art—as nought!¹

¹ "O Welt, du bist so nichtig!
 Du bist so klein, O Rom!"

O Rome! where falls my blossom,
Like withered leaf, away,
Beseems not that thy bosom
Should guard the Cæsar's clay.
The hands that could betray me
My mouldering bones would raise;
So bear me hence, and lay me
By mighty Charles at Aix.

The palms of praise undying
Around his banner wait;
I have beheld him lying
In his imperial state.
What could have led me vainly
His coffin to unclose,
And stir the wreath profanely
That veiled his dread repose?

O friends! give o'er your grieving,
And speak me words of cheer,
And, with your good swords cleaving
A passage for my bier,
Let my young grave and nameless,
Some short-lived roses claim,
And gently lay the fameless
Beside the man of fame.

H. T.



The Ideal.

SCHILLER.

AND wilt thou faithlessly depart,
 With all thy visions bright and high,
 Thy powers to bless and wound the heart,
 Inexorable, wilt thou fly?
 Life's golden spring-time, art thou gone?
 Oh, linger yet awhile with me!
 In vain — thy waves are hurrying on
 Into the everlasting sea!

Quenched are those bright, exultant beams,
 Gilding the pathway of the boy;
 Outrun are those ideal streams,
 Whence quaffed my heart its giddy joy.
 That sweet belief is passed away
 In beings that had in dreams their birth;
 Those heavenly visions are a prey
 To harsh realities of earth!

As once, with hope and passion glowing,
 Pygmalion clasped the soulless stone,
 Till through its chilly veins was flowing
 A living spirit like his own;
 So, Nature's mute and awful form,
 In the loving arms of youth I pressed,
 Till she began to breathe, to warm,
 To live, upon the Poet's breast.

Caught by the fire within me burning,
 Earth's voiceless beauty spake and moved,

My warm embrace to me returning,
 Breathing and loving as I loved ;
 For me the tree, the rose, were living,
 The silvery fountain sang apart,
 Even soulless things their echo giving
 To the music of youth's happy heart !

How soared and strove my spirit then !
 An universe was prisoned there !
 Amid the busy life of men
 I longed to speak, and do, and dare !
 Great was the world I saw in dreams,
 While hidden in the germ from view ;
 How little now that greatness seems !
 How poor its pleasures, and how few !

Life's evil joyously disdaining,
 Happy in dreams, believed for truth,
 No care as yet his ardour reining,
 How into life sprang forth the youth !
 Up, up, to æther's palest star
 The eagle-flight of thought could spring ;
 Nought was too high, and nought too far,
 To baffle that exhaustless wing.

How light his rapid coursers bore him !
 What was, for him, too hard or high ?
 How danced, with beckoning hands, before him,
 An airy, gladsome company !
 Love, with his sweet and sure reward ;
 Bliss, with her glittering circlet there ;
 Fame, with her starry crown and sword ;
 Truth, clad in sunlight, sternly fair !

But ah! each sweet companion leaves him
Ere half the weary way be done;
Their faithless beauty but deceives him,
And they forsake him, one by one.
Light-footed Bliss hath sought the skies,
Unquenched is Wisdom's burning thirst,
And envious clouds of doubt arise
To sully Truth, so pure at first!

I saw Fame's dedicated wreath
Profaned on an unworthy head;
Ah! far too soon fleets Love's bright noon,
When once his brief spring-morn hath fled!
More and more lonely, mute, and dark,
Grows hour by hour the dreary way;
Scarce can faint Hope afford one spark
To light with wan and glimmering ray.

Of all those bright and buoyant bands,
Who, fond and faithful, stays behind?
Who, by my side, consoling, stands,
And even till death is true and kind?
Thou, whose light touch of tenderness
Hath power to heal each inward wound,
Who lovest to soothe life's weariness,
Friendship, thou early sought and found!

And thou, meet partner of her merit,
Like her, the storm appeasing ever,
Unwearying Diligence of spirit,
Slow gaining, but destroying never;
Which brings but grains of sand to rear
The fabric of eternal ages,

Yet pays, by minute, day, and year,
The debt inscribed on Time's vast pages!

S. M.

The Lyre and the Sword.


SUGGESTED BY THE TITLE OF KÖRNER'S MINOR POEMS.

"OH, arm thee, youthful warrior,
And gird me to thy side!
Come forth to breast, undaunted,
The battle's crimson tide;
Where the clarion soundeth joyously
A free and forward blast,
And where, 'twixt death and victory,
Lies all the choice thou hast!"
So, with full many a stirring word,
Did speak the stern and clashing sword.

But a lyre hung near that falchion,
From whose unheeded strings
Came a low and plaintive murmur,
Like the sound of viewless wings:
"Oh, cast thy fearful arms away!"
Such were the words it spake,
"And think on those that watch and pray
Afar, for thy dear sake!
Ah, bring not thou the voice of tears
Into the home of thine early years!"

Again the sword sang fiercely
Its strain of martial glee:
"Oh, arm thee, youthful warrior,—
The battle waits for thee!

Think on thy hero-sire, who died
Amid its wildest burst;
Think how his name hath glorified
The home where thou wert nursed.
Do not thy childhood's memories all
Tell brightly of his fame and fall?"

"But ah," the sad lyre whispered, 
"How terrible to die,
While youth, and joy, and honour,
Shine in the cloudless eye!
Think how thy mother wept and kneeled
That sire's low tomb before;
At length her fount of tears is sealed,
Oh, open it no more!
Is it thy hand that should unfold
The memory of her griefs of old?"

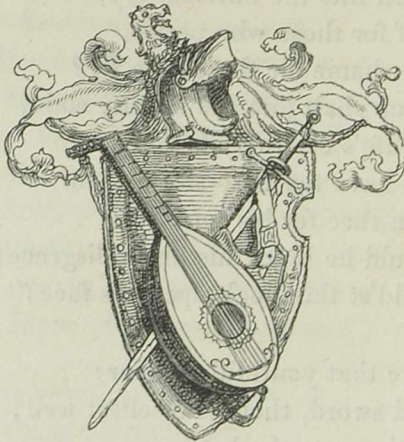
The sword spake yet more proudly:
"Which lifts the bitterest cry,
The grief for those who perish,
Or the shame for those who fly?
When thou shalt join the mighty slain,
When life's brief day is done,
Would'st have thy hero-sire disdain
To own thee for his son?
How should he brook his line's disgrace?
How could'st thou look upon his face?"

Out spake that youthful warrior:
"Good sword, thou counsellest well;
Come with me to the battle,
Where my true father fell:

Fair honour is the queen I serve,
Bright fame the gem I seek ;
Nor will I suffer, nor deserve,
A blush to stain my cheek !
Unshaken let me ever stand,
Honour at heart, and sword in hand !

And thou, ^{*}fond lyre, remember
Thou art not wont to weep
On those who tamely perish
In slothfulness and sleep ;
Still have thy noblest strains been poured
Above the true and free ;
Still loves the lyre to grace the sword —
So let it ever be !
The sword to win my victor-wreath,
The lyre to solemnise my death !”

S. M.



The Lay of the Horseman.

KÖRNER.

ARISE, my war-steed, valiantly,
 The world lies free before us;
 All vainly hostile craft may try
 To cast its meshes o'er us:
 Rise up and rear, thou generous horse,
 Yon oak-wreath beckons on;
 Spring forth, spring forth, nor stay thy course,
 For the sword-dance is begun!

High in the heavens, unconquered now,
 The soul of knighthood goes;
 What lies below on earth's dull brow
 He neither heeds nor knows:
 Care, need, and pain lie far beneath—
 Wife, children, hearth, and board;
 Before him, liberty or death,
 And by his side, his sword.

So shall he join the bridal state,
 His wedding wreath to gain;
 But him who lets his lady wait,
 The knightly band disdain:
 Bright honour is the bridal guest,
 The bride, our native soil;
 He who hath clasped her to his breast
 Meets death, and with a smile!

Oh! such a slumber hath its charms,
 Though dark the night may prove;

Thou sleepest in thy country's arms,
 Watched truly by her love :
And when the tender oak-buds break
 Forth into summer's glee,
With joyful pride she shall thee wake
 To a world for ever free !

Then smile success, or frown disgrace,
 Our fortune's changeful star,
We dare look calmly in the face
 The issue of the war.
For German liberty we stand !
 Be it in victory hot,
Or in the clasp of death's cold hand,
 We glory in our lot !

And should God smile upon the fray—
 Scoff not ! We ne'er can yield,
For God's own arm hath been our stay,
 His strength is still our shield :
The storm is mustering in its wrath,
 We'll win, my steed, or fall ;
Did a thousand devils bar the path,
 Thy way lies through them all !

S. M.





Lenore.

Lenore.

BURGER.

FROM heavy dreams arose Lenore,
 When day was dawning red;
 "O Wilhelm! wilt thou come no more?
 And art thou false, or dead?"
 He fought with Frederick's armèd powers
 Beneath fair Prague's beleaguèred towers,
 No tidings of his weal returning
 To her from whom he parted mourning.

The king and empress, wearied now
 With strife so long and vain,
 Rein the proud heart, and smooth the brow,
 And join in peace again;
 And either host, with song and lay,
 And cymbal-clash, and clarion gay,
 And laurelled brows, and shouts of mirth,
 Wend joyously to home and hearth.

And every where, do porch and stair,
 Terrace, and bridge, and street,
 Groan with a throng of old and young,
 Those merry troops to greet.
 "Thank God!" fond wives and children cry—
 "Welcome!" the glad bride whispers, shy.—
 But kiss and greeting came no more
 To thee, ah, desolate Lenore!

And to and fro, and name by name,
 The train she questions through;
 Alas, not one of all who came
 Tidings of Wilhelm knew!

Now, when the mighty host had past,
Down on the earth herself she cast,
And rent, with gestures of despair,
The ringlets of her raven hair!

Soon ran her mother to her side,
With quick and fond embrace;
"What ails my darling child?" she cried;
"Now God vouchsafe his grace!"
"O mother, mother! Woe is woe!
Hence, dreary world, with all thy woe!
God hath no help—no pity, fate;
Alas for me most desolate!"

"Help, Lord! Oh, cast us not away!
Whate'er Thou dost is right!
Kneel down, my daughter, kneel and pray,
And God shall give thee light."
"O mother, mother! Idle thought!
For me hath God no mercy wrought!
My prayers were all in vain, in vain!
What need I now to pray again?"

"Help, Lord! Our Father's pitying love
All those who seek have found:
The holy sacrament shall prove
Balm to thy burning wound."
"O mother, mother! what I feel
No sacrament can soothe or heal:
No sacrament restores," she said,
"Life to the cold and speechless dead."

"Yet hear!—if, false to faith and truth,
In some far paynim land

He leaves the lessons of his youth,
And seeks another's hand,
Forget him : little joy, believe,
His bootless falsehood shall achieve ;
The crime, when soul and body part,
Shall lie like lead upon his heart."

" O mother, death, and death alone
I covet, most forlorn !
For lost is lost, and gone is gone ;
Would I had ne'er been born !
Die, die, my light, for ever die !
Quenched, quenched in night and sorrow, lie !
God hath no help,—no pity, fate ;
Woe, woe to me, most desolate !"

" Help, Lord ! Oh, judge her not, nor mark
Thy poor child's erring ways !
Her words are wild, her soul is dark,
She knows not what she says.
Ah, child, forget thine earthly fate,
On God's pure bliss to meditate ;
So to thy spirit shall be given
A better spouse— a spouse from heaven."

" O mother, mother, what is bliss ?
O mother, what is hell ?
With him, with him is only bliss,
Without my Wilhelm, hell !
Die, die, my light, for ever die !
Quenched, quenched, in night and sorrow lie !
Severed from him, to this lone heart
Nor earth nor heaven can bliss impart."

In burning brain and bursting vein
 Despair his empire held ;
 With God's good will, her spirit still
 Thus strove, and thus rebelled ;
 She rent her hair, she beat her breast,
 Till sank the weary sun to rest,
 And the clear arch of purple night
 Was peopled by the stars of light.

Hark! on the pavement, tramp, tramp, tramp,
 A horse's flying feet ;
 With clash and clang the rider sprang
 Full swiftly from his seat ;
 And hark! the door-latch moves aloft,
 Tinkle, tinkle, slow and soft,
 Then through the door, distinct and clear,
 These words salute the maiden's ear :

"Holá, my love! the door undo!
 Sweet, dost thou wake or sleep?
 And art thou false, or art thou true?
 And dost thou smile or weep?"
 "Ah, Wilhelm, thou?—so late, mine own!
 Long have I watched and wept alone ;
 Oh, much I have endured!—and now,
 Answer me, love,—whence comest thou?"

"We only ride by night, my love ;
 From Prague's far land I come.
 Forth, forth, sweet bride—thou too must ride ;
 I come to fetch thee home!"
 "Ah, Wilhelm, only wait till morn ;
 The blast wails in the rustling thorn :
 Come, dearest, come, again to rest
 Thy head upon this faithful breast."

“ Let it whistle and wail in the withered thorn,
My child, let it wail and roar ;
But the steed stamps and springs, and the good spur
rings,

And I must not linger more.

Up, gird thyself, and mount behind !
My steed is fleeter than the wind ;
A hundred miles to-night we ride
To seek our couch, my gentle bride.”

“ A hundred miles? so brief the time !

And I—But mockest thou?

List the dull echo of the chime—

It struck eleven but now !”

“ Look up! the moon shines clear and wide,

We and the dead, full fast we ride !

I warrant, fairest, thou and I

To-night in bridal-bed shall lie !”

“ But say, where stands thy bridal-hall ?

Thy couch, how may we gain ?”

“ Far hence—far hence! calm, cold, and small!

Six narrow planks, by twain !”

“ Is room for me ?” “ For thee and me !

Come, mount behind me speedily !

The wedding guests await the bride ;

The chamber doors are opened wide.”

She came, she sprang, she sate behind

Upon the steed in haste ;

Her lily hands she softly twined

Around her lover's waist ;

And hurry, hurry, clash, clash, clash !

In clattering gallop forth they dash :

The horseman stoops, the charger reels,
And spurns the sparks with flashing heels.

Right hand and left, with dazzled eye,

She sees, in shrinking wonder,

The field, the fence, the forest, fly!

Hark, how the bridges thunder!

“Fear'st thou, my love? The moon shines bright:

Hurrah! the dead ride fast by night!

And fears my love the dead?” “Ah, nay;

Yet speak not of the dead, I pray!”

Why flutter the ravens wild and grim?

What means yon murmuring strain?

'Tis the tolling bell, 'tis the funeral hymn,

A corpse, and a mourner-train!

On, on they come, so slow, so drear!

They bear a coffin on a bier;

Their note, I ween, was hoarse and harsh,

As lizard's croak in lonely marsh.

“Bury your dead when the midnight's past,

Sad troop and wailing priest!

I ride with my fair young wife, so fast,

Come, come to the bridal feast!

Come hither, come hither, thou chorister train,

And mutter and mumble a festive strain;

Come, priest, and be thy blessing said

Before we seek our bridal bed.”

Ceased voice and bell, as by a spell,

And vanished bier and corse;

And hurry, hurry, close they fly

At the heels of the startled horse;

And ever onward, clash, clash, clash,
In clattering gallop forth they dash ;
The rider stoops, the charger reels,
And spurns the sparks with thundering heels.

How fast, how fast, fly darting past
Hill, mountain, tree, and bower ;
Right, left, and right, they fly like light,
Hamlet, and town, and tower !
“ Fear’st thou, my love ? The moon shines bright ;
Hurrah ! the dead ride fast by night.
And dost thou dread the silent dead ? ”
“ Ah, leave them to their rest, the dead ! ”

Look there ! look there ! half seen, half lost,
In the moonshine dimly glancing,
By the gallows-tree an airy host
Around the wheel are dancing.
“ Sa, sa ! ye rabble, come, obey ;
Pursue us on our rapid way :
A festive measure ye must tread,
Before we mount our bridal bed.”

And hiss, hiss, hiss, all clattering, rush
That rabble crew behind,
As through a withered hazel-bush
Rattles the hollow wind.
And onward, onward, clash, clash, clash,
In thundering gallop forth they dash !
The horseman stoops, the charger reels,
And spurns the sparks with flashing heels.

The cold, strange scene, in moonlight sheen,
How fled it fast and far !

How seemed to fly the heavens on high,
 With planet, cloud, and star!
 "Fear'st thou, my love? The moon shines bright;
 Hurrah! the dead ride fast by night.
 And dost thou dread the silent dead?"
 "Woe's me! Ah, speak not of the dead!"

"My steed! I hear the cock-crow warn—
 Soon is the sand outrun!
 My steed! I scent the breath of morn.
 Down, down, my steed! 'Tis done!
 We reach the goal—the race is past—
 'Tis found, 'tis found, our home at last.
 Hurrah! how swiftly ride the dead!
 Hurrah! we reach our bridal bed."

Sudden, against a grated door,
 With slackened rein they dart:
 One little stroke the fastenings broke—
 The bolts are burst apart.
 With clashing sound the doors unclose,
 And over graves their pathway goes;
 While many a tombstone, dim and white,
 Gleams in the moonshine's ghastly light.

Ah, see! ah, see! the rider's mail—
 Oh, sight of fear and wonder!—
 Doth, piece by piece, like tinder frail,
 Drop suddenly asunder.
 A skull, all eyeless, bare, and dead,
 A naked skull is now his head;
 While in his fleshless fingers lean
 The hour-glass and the scythe are seen.

The steed stamps wild, the steed rears high,
And scatters sparks around ;
And, ah, beneath her suddenly
It sinks in the yawning ground !
High through the air wild howlings go,
The vaults give up a voice of woe ;
Lenore's weak heart and failing breath
Struggle and pant 'twixt life and death.

Now in the white and cold moonlight,
In wild and wheeling train,
The ghosts begin a fetter-dance,
And howl a mournful strain :
" Forbear, forbear ! With God in heaven
Contend not, though thy heart be riven !
Thy sinful clay hath ceased to live ;
Thine erring soul may God forgive !"

S. M.

The Mother's Lesson.

ALL night she wept the hours away,
With burning cheek and throbbing head,
Crying, " Alas !" and " Well-a-day !"
" Woe is me, for my sons are dead !"

She could not rest, she could not sleep,
She tossed in fever on her bed,
She could not pray ; she could but weep,
" Woe is me, for my sons are dead !"

And as the weary hours went by,
And the chimes they sounded heavily,

The lonely one did shrink and start
From the slow stern tread of misery,
Printing its footstep on her heart.

Sometimes their names did in her brain
Sound, and sound, and sound again,
In a strange and ceaseless round ;
As though a whirling wheel were there,
And every ruthless turn did tear
A fresh and bleeding wound.

Sometimes a trivial phrase or glance,
With her deep grief at variance,
Would in her memory rise ;
And there it mocked her desolation
By meaningless reiteration
Of peevish fantasies ;
Like shape or pattern, deftly wrought,
Vexing a sick man's feverish thought.

But never did she dare to see
The faces of the newly dead
Rise up before her memory,
By life and love retenanted ;
As shrinks the victim from the blade,
Her spirit, helpless and afraid,
Did from that vision shrink :
No passing thought her sorrows were,
No ancient and familiar care,
But the bitterness of vague despair,
Which is afraid to think.

And so she wept the hours away,
And tossed in fever on her bed ;

She could not sleep, she could not pray,
She could but wring her hands, and say,
“Woe is me, for my sons are dead!”

Soft, and clear, and calm, and slow,
Breaks a sound upon her woe,—

It is the matin-bell!

Dropping, like the gradual rain
On some parched and lifeless plain,
Sounds which in their fulness are
Measured, deep, and regular;
Strangely with her grief it blent,
And a stranger softness lent
To each tear that fell.

She leaves her couch, she seeks her door:
And far athwart the filmy night
The coming day shines pale and grey,
Like shadowy moonshine's colder light:
The sleeping flowers forget to raise
Their downcast heads to greet its gaze;
All voiceless are the woodland trees,
Where birds should pour their melodies;
The sheeted dew gleams white and wan,
As underneath the stars it shone;—
But still those chiming bells repeat
Their matin warning, calm and sweet.

Slow to the church the mourner hied,
Scarce conscious of the well-known way;
The sacred doors are opened wide,
She enters in, and kneels to pray:
No torches flung their beams aloof
Upon the tall and arching roof;

No tapers shed their holier light
On sculptured shrine and column white;
But all along the ancient aisles,
 And by the tombs where slept the dead,
O'er carvèd niche and tracery rich,
 There seemed a solemn twilight shed,
Clinging to cross and image pale,
E'en like a garment or a veil.

By that mysterious light she sees
A multitude upon their knees,—
Shapes half familiar and half strange,
Like friends on whom hath passed a change;
Antique in garb, they seemed a crowd
 Of worshippers from other lands,
And every hidden face was bowed
 Upon the clasped and lifted hands;
And not a sound of psalm or prayer
Arose upon the vacant air;
They moved no limb, they spake no word,
Save inarticulate murmurs heard,
Like leaves that in the wind are stirred,
Or like the distant roll of seas,
When not a breath awakes the breeze.

At once their faces all upraise—
What sight hath met her startled gaze?
Lo, every face full well she knows!
And some were friends, and some were foes,
And some were young, and some were old,
And some were kind, and some were cold,
And some were fair, and some were brave,—
But ALL had long been in the grave!

From early childhood's gladsome years,
Down to these days of lonely tears,
All she had known, and loved, and lost,
Were round her in a solemn host,
Wearing on every brow of gloom
The paleness of their place—the tomb!
Now on her feet the mother stood,
With giddy brain and curdling blood;
And yet, in frantic hope she scanned
The younger faces of the band,
But she sees not there the shining hair,
And the cloudless eyes so clear and fair;
Wringing her hands in fresh despair,
She cries aloud, "In vain—in vain!
Oh, could I see my sons again!"

A mighty sound the silence brake:
The echoes of the aisles awake;
It was as if the organ spake
 With voice articulate:
"Look to the east!" it said, and ceased;
And on the vaulted space once more
Did silence settle as before,
 Dreary and desolate.

The mourner turned—the mourner saw—
Oh, sight of wonder and of awe!
There stood a block on the altar-floor,
And a fearful wheel by the sacred door,
Whereon two hapless ones did lie,
Wrestling with life's last agony!
Each in prison-garb and guise,
 Each a youth, scarce grown a man:

Horror!—in their filmèd eyes,
In their lips so white and wan,
Lo, the lineaments she traces
Of her sons' remembered faces,
Even as they perchance might grow
After years of crime and woe!

With staring eyes and clenching hands,
Without a cry, or word, or groan,
Motionless the mother stands,
Like a solemn shape of stone,—
While again the silence breaks,
And the mighty voice awakes :

“Murmurer at the will of Heaven!
Doubter of the love of God!
See the life thou wouldst have given,
See the path they must have trod!
Now they sleep as infants sleep,
Taken from the woes to come :
Hence, poor wanderer, pray and weep,—
But thou too shalt find thy home!”

Ceased the voice ; and over all
Did a sudden darkness fall,
Save for scattered rays that stream
With a faint and earthly gleam
From the lamp that mourner bore ;
While, upon the marble floor,
Fall, through windows arched and old,
Showers of silver moonlight cold.

Patiently she wept awhile,
Patiently she prayed for grace,

Till the sweetness of a smile
Settled on her placid face;
Kneeling thus, she prayed, she wept,
Till it seemed as though she slept,
For, by angel-fingers shed,
Death's kind balm upon her head
Dropped so gently. Tears a few,
Of repentance calm and meek,
Glistened, as baptismal dew
Glistens on an infant's cheek,
Washing from the heart within
Shades of grief and stains of sin!

S. M.



The Siberian's Death-Song.

[This singular little poem was pronounced by Goethe to be one of the best that Schiller ever wrote.]

HE sits upon the matted floor,
He sitteth there upright,
With the same aspect that he wore
When his eye saw the light.

But where is now the strong right hand,
And where the vigorous breath,
Which to the spirit of our land
Blew the pipe's curling wreath?

Where is the falcon-glance that knew
The reindeer's steps to count,
O'er the wavy grass, besprent with dew,
Or by the moss-grown fount?

These limbs, that once more lightly ran
Along the fields of snow
Than the stately stag of ten, or than
The mountain's rapid roe;

These arms, that once the bow could twang
With strong and agile haste,
Behold how lifelessly they hang—
Nerveless, unstrung, unbraced!

Joy be to him, for he is now
Where there are no snow-showers,
And where the fields for ever glow
With self-created flowers;

Where every grove is full of birds,
Of fish each placid lake,
And the wild deer, in sportive herds,
Fill every forest-brake.

He feasteth in the land of Soul;
He leaves us here in gloom,
His deeds of prowess to extol,
And his body to entomb.

Bring ye the last sad offering,
And lift the funeral song;
All things to bury with him bring
For which his soul may long.

Lay his stout axe his head below,
Well proved in chase and war,
And the wild bear's oily haunch, for know
He journeyeth afar.

And the sharply-pointed dagger too,
Which from the foe's head ever
By three swift strokes, well aimed and true,
Both skin and scalp could sever.

And the brightest colours ye must choose,
And place them in his hand,
That he may shine with sun-like hues
In that far spirit-land.

S. M.



The Minstrel's Curse.

UHLAND

IN days of yore, beside the sea, upon the silver sand,
There stood a stately castle, far shining through the land ;
Girdled by odorous gardens, within whose flowery bound
A thousand twinkling rivulets in rainbow brightness wound.

There dwelt a king of pride and might—so runs the
solemn tale—

All on his throne he sat alone, so gloomy and so pale ;
With thoughts of terror in his heart, and torture in his word,
His eye an eye of fury—his pen a bloody sword !

There came unto this castle a noble minstrel pair,
One crowned with golden ringlets, and one with hoary hair ;

The aged minstrel with his harp upon a palfrey rode,
And by his side in youth's gay pride his blooming comrade
strode.

The old man spake unto the youth, " My son, this fateful
hour
Pour forth thy richest melodies and strains of deepest
power ;
And summon up thy mastery o'er joy and sorrow's spring,
For 'tis our task to touch to-night this stony-hearted
king !"

Behold, beneath the pillared dome those simple minstrels
stand ;
There sate the monarch on his throne, his queen at his
right hand ;
He, like the meteor's blood-red glare, in awful majesty—
She, like the full moon, calm and fair, in summer's tran-
quil sky.

The aged minstrel struck his harp, he struck with wondrous
skill,
And gathering richness as they rise, his notes the wide hall
fill,
Blent with the youth's transparent voice, a stream as crys-
tal sheen,
And, like some solemn spirit-strain, the old man's tones
between.

They sang of spring-time and of love — of happy golden
days,
Of freedom and of dauntlessness, of faith, and prayer, and
praise ;

They sang of all sweet impulses, the trembling heart that
thrill,
They sang of all high thoughts that raise and purify the
will.

Hushed is the mocking courtier-group that stands around
the throne,
The king's defying warriors, the power of God they own ;
The queen, in strange sweet pensiveness, all melting at the
strain,
Plucks from her breast of snow a rose, and drops it to the
twain.

“Ye have misled my people, seduce ye now my queen?”
Thus, quivering with fury, spake that king of wrathful
mien ;
He hurls his flashing sword, it cleaves the youth's un-
guarded heart,
Thence, for a golden stream of song, doth life's red torrent
start!

The hearers gaze, as though a bolt had fallen before their
eyes,
While on his weeping master's breast, the fair youth sinks
and dies ;
The old man wraps him in his robe, and sets him on the
steed,
And binds his drooping form upright, and leaves the place
with speed.

Behold, before the lofty gate, that white-haired minstrel
stands,
His harp, of harps the fairest, he grasps with trembling
hands ;

Against a marble column he hath shatter'd it in twain,
And he cries, while hall and bower ring back his fearful
tones again —

“ Woe, woe, ye lofty galleries! let never music float
Along your mournful vacancy with soft and swelling note!
Vocal alone with sigh and groan, and slave's low step of
dread,
Until the God of vengeance your pride in dust shall tread!

Woe, woe, ye fragrant gardens, beneath May's sunny
glance!
Look on these dull and glassy eyes, this ghastly counte-
nance!
Your pleasant shades shall wither, your fountains shall be
dry,
A bleak and stony wilderness your wide-spread lawns shall
lie!

Woe, woe, thou ruthless murderer! thou curse of minstrel
fame!
Vainly thou seek'st a bloody wreath to twine around thy
name!
That name shall be forgotten in the depths of endless night,
And, like a bubble on the air, shall vanish from the sight!”

The old man lifted up his voice, and Heaven hath heard
his cry,
Those stately halls are desolate, in dust those turrets lie;
One lonely column stands to tell of glories passed away —
Even this, already shattered, may fall ere dawn of day.

Around, for odorous gardens, there's a waste on every
hand,
No tree gives grateful shadows, no fountain breaks the sand;

Nor can ye find that monarch's name in legend, tale, or
verse,
It hath perished—it is nothing—behold the MINSTREL'S
CURSE!

S. M.

The Emperor Henry the Fourth at Hammerstein.

ADELHEID VON STOLTERFOTH.

HIGH in his halls embattled sits Wolf of Hammerstein,
Like eagle in his eyrie at sunlight's dim decline;
Like age-worn lion calmly reposing in his lair,
That never to the forest for war again shall fare.

Erst bore he proud in battle the banner of Almayne,
And dared with open ventayle his foes on deathful plain;
True to imperial Henry, from land to land he went,
In overthrow and conquest, success and banishment.

Oft still he shuddering muses on that drear winter day
When Henry in Canossa well nigh expiring lay;
Then straight again bethinks him, with all his youthful
glow,
How they together vanquished, despite each wrathful foe.

Oft, too, before his spirit a gentle form hath smiled—
The Emperor's lofty consort, so faithful, kind, and mild:
From many a bitter sorrow, to her that Henry gave,
Long since in blissful quiet she rests in tranquil grave.

Still wars the prince, unbroken with age, and fate, and
foes,
While Wolf in castled shelter at length has found repose;

Blanched are those raven clusters, and weak that stalwart
 hand,
 And oft he gazes mournful far over wave and land :

For, ah! in vain forth ranges his troubled glance afar :
 Like him no eagle-stripling sweeps through the storm of
 war ;

Like him no youthful lion breaks down the foe's array,
 And to his aged parent brings back a victor's prey.

Oh, grief to that proud spirit! of all that goodly line,
 But two sweet sister roses adorn the lordly Rhine ;
 And seldom takes he pleasure to view each gentle child,
 And both must hear full often the answer fierce and
 wild :

“ Off, off with stole and wimple! with staff and wheel
 away !

Dost spin thee brave apparel to grace thy bridal day ?”

“ For thee I spin the mantle, my father true and dear ;
 So long as thou wilt love me, I wish no bridegroom here.”

“ Off, off with loom and shuttle! dost weave my burial
 pall ?”

“ I weave thee, dearest father, a robe for festal hall :

Oh, speak no more of dying! else must I wail in wo ;
 An 'tis to heaven's own kingdom, from us thou shalt not
 go.”

“ Ay, gladly would I tarry, were each a valiant boy,
 And press you to my bosom with pride and knightly joy ;
 But ye are feeble women, constrained in narrow place,
 And I must perish lonely, the last of all my race.”

He speaks, and from the turret he casts a lowering eye,
 In restless soul bewailing his friendless destiny:
 Soon sinks the night around him, and veils the distant
 shores;
 The tempest howls above him—the Rhine beneath him
 roars.

Hark! at the guarded postern who knocks so loud and
 late?

“The foe, the foe pursues me! Sir Knight, make ope the
 gate!”

Then wide are flung the portals—two pilgrims enter free;
 One stays within the threshold—who may the other be?

He sighs and wails full loudly as down he sinks opprest,
 That quails each gentle maiden before such gloomy guest;
 But when, at last, uprising, he rears his hoary head,
 The aged knight before him bows down in trembling dread.

“Alas! my Prince and Master! what mean these weeds
 of wo?

I see no more the purple adown thy shoulders flow!

I see no golden circlet thy honoured brows adorn!

Hath, then, the foe o’ercome thee, and cast thee forth to
 scorn?”

“Ah, comrade dear and brother! in darkest dungeon-
 night

A grisly foe hath bound me, where ne’er shone heaven’s
 light:

He tore from me the purple—he hurled me from my
 throne—

And—would’st thou seek to know him? the robber is—
 my son!”

He clasps in speechless anguish his pale and throbbing
brow,

And Wolf arises silent—light breaks upon him now!
He feels himself encircled by each fond daughter's arm,
And on his hand full softly there falls a tear-drop warm.

“Ah, well is thee!” said Henry—his voice more gentle
grows;

“Thou shalt in parting moments on faithful hearts repose;
No son with wild impatience thy birthright yearns to win,
And soon to secret wishes adds haply overt sin.

But up! and o'er the country send scouts without delay!
Cologne, still loyal, honours the old imperial sway;
And to the Rhine I bounne me when springs to-morrow's
sun,

And there in one last battle shall all be lost or won!”

Down on the couch he flings him to long-unwonted rest,
And soon hath grateful slumber his weary eyes opprest.
With fond “Good night,” his daughters Wolf to his bosom
drew,

Then by his sleeping master kept knightly vigil true.

H. T.





The Knight of Klettenburg.

COUNT Ernest of Klettenburg rose at dawn ;
It was the holy Sabbath-morn :
He saddled and mounted his steed of pride,
But not to church would Count Ernest ride.

His plume streamed fair on the summer air,
But he dight him not for the house of prayer ;
Less blithe of mien had the warrior been
Were he wending to missal and mass, I ween.

To Elric's halls Count Ernest went,
For feasting, mirth, and merriment,

Where a chain of gold was the knight's award
Who tarried the longest by beaker and board.

Oh, blithely the clarion ringeth afar,
Summoning knights to the lists of war;
But blither, Count Ernest, that tourney of thine,
Where the weapons were cups, and the blood bright wine!

The matin-bells were sounding yet
When the knights for that gay carousal met;
When broadly glittered the noontide sun,
They deemed their banquet scarce begun.

Now softer light the plains receive,
Day sinks into the lap of eve,
And feverish hearts grow cool and calm,
As flowers beneath the falling balm.

The sweetness of the Sabbath-day
Hath soothed full many a tear away,
And shed on many a grateful breast
Pardon for sin, for anguish rest.

Little recked he, that godless knight,
Of solemn season and holy rite,
Or the clearness of eve in the purple sky,
Like the light of a calm reproving eye.

For the wine still foamed, and the cups still passed,
Though many a brain was dizzying fast;
One by one they staggered and sank,
But all the more blithely Count Ernest drank.

High flushed his cheek, wild flamed his eye,
When he saw the bold carousers lie;

They sank and they staggered one by one,
Till Count Ernest sate by the board alone.

Up with a shout of triumph he sprang,
Till the table shook and the beakers rang;
The brimming cups he hath swept aside,
And circled his neck with the chain of pride.

Forth he strode to the castle-gate;
Soon on his steed the warrior sate;
He galloped through street and he galloped through lane,
That men might gaze on the hard-won chain.

But scarce a man met Count Ernest there,
It was the hour of vesper-prayer;
The streets they leave, and the church they fill,—
Count Ernest deemed it a miracle.

A wrinkled crone, as the knight rode by,
Peered from her casement angrily,
And pointed on to the church-tower old,
Nor seemed to mark the chain of gold.

“By heaven!” cried the wrathful Count aloud,
“I will shew my prize to yon saintly crowd!”
So he spurred his steed through the church’s door,
And the hoofs they clashed on the sacred floor.

The choristers paused, and the organ ceased;
Forth stepped in wrath the reverend priest;
Up started the worshippers, scared and pale;
But the Count rode straight to the altar-rail.

He urged his steed to the fatal bound—
But its shoes fell off on the outraged ground!

He spurred, and he swore a terrible oath—
But the pavement yawned, and it swallowed them both!

Down, down the steed and his rider shot!—
Oh, never the hearts around forgot
The greyness of fear on his face which fell,
And his last wild cry, as he sank to hell!

The pavement closed with a crashing sound;
But the shoes were left on the holy ground;
So they hung them up by the chancel-wall,
A warning to Sabbath-breakers all!

S. M.

Two Cradle Songs.

FOUQUÉ.

I.

Hush thee, hush thee, baby dear;
Placid slumber's chain hath bound thee;
Lie thou still, no danger fear,
Thoughts of love are all around thee.
Loving parents watch thy slumber,
Planning for thee future pleasure—
Joys and blessings without number:
Sleep, thou only tiny treasure!

Joyful cares our watch beguiling
As we bend above thee sleeping,
Smiling aye when thou art smiling,
Soothing aye when thou art weeping:
Such the lot that parents love;
And their fondest hope through life,
To lift their children far above
The sorrows of this world of strife.

But ah, this tender care of ours
 Will not retain thee aye at home!
 Too soon will come those riper hours
 When thou wilt sigh the world to roam.
 On thy charger thou wilt spring
 Up the Alpine pass of snow,
 Soaring high on conquest's wing,
 While thy mother weeps below.

And yet, for that, delay not thou
 To battle with this world of care;
 The blessings that surround thee now
 Go forth and with another share.
 The time may come when thou shalt prove
 A loving, tender parent too;
 And thus, the rosy chain of love
 Blooms ever old, yet ever new.

II.

How sighs the gale of morning
 Full sweetly through the shade!
 Wild flowers, each bank adorning,
 Breathe perfume from the glade!

How white the vapour hovers
 O'er Kalmbach's reedy sides,
 Like veil that sylphid lovers
 Spread o'er their elfin brides!

And soft the infant slumbers,
 While we above him sing
 Those sweetly-soothing numbers
 That brightest visions bring!

Strew o'er him dewy flowers
Sparkling with morning's beams,
That thoughts of fairy bowers
May mingle in his dreams.

Dream softly, dear, and sweetly—
Dream of a happy morrow,
That brightly glides, and fleetly,
Without a cloud of sorrow.

Joy of my peaceful dwelling,
My lovely opening blossom,
How soft the breath is swelling
Thy snowy infant bosom!

Alas, in times hereafter,
What sighs will heave that breast!
To groans will turn thy laughter,
To wakefulness thy rest.

Then may the Powers above thee
Thy troubled heart beguile,
The Muses deign to love thee,
The Graces o'er thee smile!

For if their bright creations
Glance sweet before thine eyes,
What fair imaginations
Shall 'mid the gloom arise!

The

Death-Song of the Sea-King Regner Lodbrog.

[This ballad is founded on the prose translation of the original, given in our English version of Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. Regner Lodbrog was a renowned Danish sea-king, who lived early in the ninth century. He was taken prisoner by Ella king of Northumberland, and flung into a dungeon, where he was stung to death by serpents. During his last agonies he is said to have recapitulated the exploits of his life, and defied his torturer, in the words of the remarkable poem, some idea of which I have endeavoured to convey. Whether the whole was actually composed by him or not—a point which is contested—it is highly characteristic, and gives a vivid picture of the heroes of the North before the introduction of Christianity.]

We fought with the sword
 In Gothland so wide,
 When my steel did pierce the serpent fierce,
 And won the fair-haired bride ;
 I thrust him through with my blade so blue,
 He staggered, and he fell :
 Oh, glorious things the good sword brings
 To him that wields it well !

We fought with the sword
 In the straits of Eirar ;
 Our good blades sang with their joyous clang
 Against the helms of war.

Then rushed the blood in a purple flood ;
And high were the corpses piled,
For the golden-footed eagle's food,
And the wolf of the pathless wild.

We fought with the sword,
And with high-lifted spears,
When the sea around was one wide wound,¹—
Those were my youthful years !
We sent the men of Helsing then
To the realms of ruddy morn ;
We ravaged their glades, and our haughty blades
Did laugh their mail to scorn !

We fought with the sword
On the southern coast :
On that dread day none fled away
Of all our slaughtered host !
Rogvaldur died—my son, my pride !
His crest was steeped in blood ;
And the vultures grim they waited for him
Who was wont to give them food.

We fought with the sword
'Mid the clamour of lances,
When our banners bright gave back the light
From gleaming steel which glances ;
Our good ships' grew of a crimson hue,
As when, at the festal board,
By the soft white hands of maiden bands
The ruddy wine is poured !

¹ This expression is in the original.

We fought with the sword,
 Slaying Harald so bold;¹
 The blushing hue of his proud cheek grew
 In death's grey twilight cold!
 Proud was he as a maid might be,
 Smoothfaced, and softly drest;
 But the ringlets fair of his flowing hair
 Now line the raven's nest!

We fought with the sword!
 But my death-hour draws near:—
 Ah, sons so true, if ye but knew,
 Right soon ye would be here!
 My foes should feel your lightning steel—
 Well may my sons be bold;
 For the mother I gave had a heart as brave
 As the hearts of the kings of old!

We fought with the sword!
 I am called to the sky,
 But I leave not now on earth below
 A braver king than I!
 I shall quaff the bowl in the land of soul,
 I shall feast in the upper skies:
 Ella, behold how Regner the bold
 Laughs even as he dies!

S. M.

¹ Harald, king of Norway, surnamed *Harfax*, or *Fair-locks*.
 This is the same as our English name *Fairfax*.



The Gnipen, or Wood-Spirit.

A NORWEGIAN LEGEND.

IN the twilight morn of the waning year
Went Swain the woodsman forth ;
And his tread you might hear o'er the leaves dry and sere,
From Drontheim towards the north.

Lustily sang he, I trow, and well ;
Nor of man nor of ghost had he fear :
For the monk he may dwell in Drontheim's cell,
But Swain's is the forest drear.

And still as he goes the green trees fade—
For he hews him their branches all ;
And a pile he has made, in the forest glade,
Of the larch and the pine so tall.

But the Gnipen he marked him as he stood
Beneath a branching oak ;
And the boughs so good of the merry greenwood,
They trembled as he spoke.

“ Now by our joyous greenwood king,
Who loves old Norway’s pine,
The birds they shall sing where green boughs spring,
For all that axe of thine.”

The Gnipen has donned him a cowl so grey—
’Twas St. Francis’s cowl, I ween ;
And he said, “ By my fay, the woodsman to-day
Shall rue for his axe so keen.”

So Swain, he took of his woodsman’s food
At the witching hour of noon,
When by him there stood, in the merry greenwood,
A monk in his sandalled shoon.

“ O tell me, O tell me, thou woodsman bold,
O tell me eftsoon, I pray :
For since bells have tolled o’er wood and o’er wold
When monks arise to pray,

I have wandered alone in the greenwood bower ;
So tell me my path through the boughs,
That in Drontheim’s tower at vesper-hour
I may quit me of my vows.”

“ Little reck I of thy monkish vow,
Of thy cowl, and thy beads so fair ;
Though in cloister, I trow, there is feasting enow,
And the forest is wild and bare.

Yet an thou hadst toiled one day with me
To cleave the gnarled oak,

Small woe would it be 'neath the greenwood tree
To roam since morning broke."

"Though I bear of St. Francis the rigid yoke,
Yet no puny arm is mine;
And, woodsman, my stroke might fell the oak,
As well as stroke of thine."

Then loud laughed Swain, in scornful cheer:
"Come rid thee to-day of thy rule,
And bid thy arm rear, 'stead of monkish gear,
The woodsman's hardy tool:

But fells it yon oak ere close of day,
Whose branches o'er us tower,
May the Gnipen grey bear my soul away
At the chime of evening hour!"

He recked not that friar of his smile or his frown,
And never word he spoke;
But he sat him down in the shadow brown
Of the lofty gnarled oak.

Now sank the sun to northern men,
And sank on Drontheim's tower;
And there wanted then but nine strokes or ten
To the chime of evening hour.

Then sprang from the ground that friar, and spake,
As his axe on high did shine:
"For my rule I'll take, and the greenwood's sake,
This single stroke of mine."

The oak he has struck it but once and no more,
But cleft is the gnarled wood;
And it fell with the roar on the rocky shore
Of the Maelstrom's boiling flood.

And darker grew that friar grey,
 And tall as Drontheim's tower ;
 And he vanished away with Swain that day,
 At the chime of evening hour :

And he set him on high in the forest drear,
 Where the pine's tall branches spring ;
 That woodsmen may fear the axe to rear
 Near the haunt of the greenwood king.

And still as the hailstones o'er him patter,
 As the peasant hies him past,
 He hears the loud clatter, while still his teeth chatter,
 In the biting evening blast.

R. I. W.

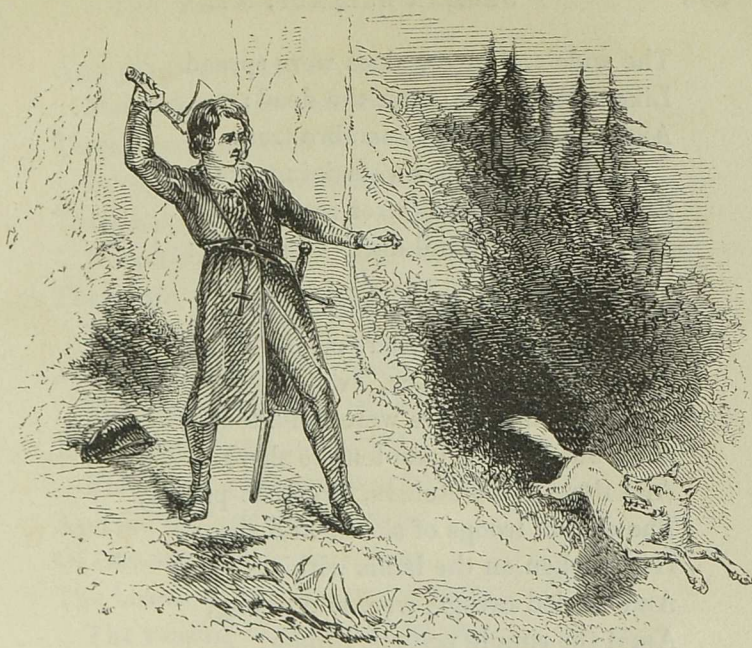
—
Consolation.

FOUQUÉ.

If life were fair around thee,
 Fair as thy heart had willed,
 Without a grief to wound thee,
 Or a bright hope unfulfilled ;
 Mortal, for death preparing,
 Couldst thou to death submit ?
 Thou wouldst refuse, despairing,
 A world so dear to quit !

But one by one, thou knowest,
 Life's gentle bands are riven ;
 So, cheered at heart, thou goest
 Through the deep grave to heaven.
 The chains of fear are broken,
 Hope's star is bright aloft,—
 Oft has this truth been spoken,
 But never yet too oft !

S. M.



The Hermit and the White Wolf.

UNDER the shade of the sullen pine,
Where cliffs o'erhang a rugged shore,
A little chapel and a shrine
Stands, with a cross above the door ;
And in the shadow of the cross
Is built a low and rustic cell,
With roof of thatch and floor of moss,
Wherein two holy hermits dwell.

Darkly frowned the rocks around,
And the mighty cliffs by age embrowned ;
The tossing sea did chafe and start
Like visions in a troubled heart ;

The wide and heavy skies were spread
Like a black pall above the dead ;
And pathless wilds of sombre trees
 Wearied the gazer's straining eye—
Even so remorse in terror sees,
 Vague, drear, and dark—Futurity!

A solemn charge those hermits bore,
They watched as warders on the shore,
For by no earthly race, 'twas said,
Those gloomy scenes were tenanted ;
And, but for that lone temple there,
And those two watchers, strong in prayer,
The demon troops of shame and sin
Had broken on the lands within,
And carried ravage, woe, and wrong,
Amid the simple peasant throng.

A grey-haired warrior was the one,
His comrade was his valiant son ;
Each had lived a life of fame,
Each had earned a glorious name ;
Though the heart of age in scorn
 Coldly turns from earth's bright things,
Seldom in youth's cloudless morn
 Spirits fold their weary wings ;
Yet Sir Conrad gazed not now
 Wistfully on life's bright track,
For his hand was on the plough,
 And not once his heart looked back :
Toil and prayer from sun to sun,
 Thus his days were gliding by ;
Meanest things a beauty won
 From his soul's strong energy.

And yet a lone and lovely life
Methinks those watchers must have led,
Their hearts unworn by worldly strife,
By worldly hopes untenanted ;
Their only pomp the gorgeous hues
Which sunset flings upon the hills,
Their only gems the scattered dews
Which sparkle from the leaping rills ;
Their comrades the ancestral deep,
The chainless wind, the wild cascade,
The eagle, whose embattled keep
Yon solemn mountain-crest hath made ;
And for the petty din and jar
Of city-strife and human war,
The brawling of the angry stream,
The roaring of the wrathful sky—
Reality to them a dream,
And dreams their best reality.

Sir Conrad the hermit went forth at eve,
The wood of the stately pine to cleave ;
He was ware of a wolf, so white and so grim,
It came through the thicket and scowled at him.

He hurled his axe at the grim wolf's head,
Starting and yelling the creature fled ;
But it sinks in its blood, and it strives to rise,
And it stares on the knight with piteous eyes.

Then did the heart of Sir Conrad change
To a causeless softness, sudden and strange ;

Down by the bleeding wolf he knelt,
And he stanch'd its wounds with his woodman's belt.

The moonshine streamed on its face so white,
And its wide eyes gleamed with a human light ;
And much was the heart of Sir Conrad moved,
As though he had slain a thing beloved.

He lifted it gently from the earth,
And he bore it home to his lowly hearth,
And he laid it down on his couch, bestrown
With odorous thyme and with grass new-mown.

What sound is this, so full of woe,
Like the sob of a woman, plaintive and low ?
Sir Conrad turned to the couch, and there
Lay the form of a maiden, bright and fair.

And through her golden locks, dispread
In beauty over that lowly bed,
The blood was dropping—a piteous sight—
From a wound in the arm so soft and white.

“ Oh, mercy, mercy, sir knight !” she cried,
And her clear blue eyes shone wild and wide,
“ I am the child of a wizard of might ;
I was gathering herbs for my sire by night.

I saw thee pass, and I meant not harm,
But thine axe hath shattered my tender arm :
Oh, slay me not, though life be pain !
Oh, take me back to my home again !”

Scarce need I say what gentle care
The knight bestowed on the damsel fair :

He watched her couch by night and day,
As a mother watches a babe asleep;
And when eve's melting shadows lay
In softness over land and deep,
Or sparkled wood, and wave, and lawn,
Clad in the pomp of glittering dawn,
The warrior-hermit kneeled to pay
Meet service to his God, and pray,
Sweetly in that low cot arose

The voices of the sire and son,
Still craving pardon, ere repose,
For guilt incurred, or good undone;
Or praying, when their toils begin,
"Lord, keep us this day without sin!"

Half in amaze, and half in awe,
The silent maiden heard and saw;
Heard, how—as strains that fall and rise
In congregated harmonies,
Still oft return, and ever close
On the same note whence first they rose;—
In all their prayers repeated came
One holy and familiar Name,
One point, where all must meet and blend,
Crown, key, and centre, source and end;
Saw how, whene'er that Name they spake,
"Forgive us, Lord, for Jesu's sake!"

The holy light of placid hope
Came down upon each upturned face,
As generous streams, from clouds that ope,
Fall sweetly on some barren place,
Until the deadness and the gloom
Break into beauty, song, and bloom.

'Twere long to tell how change was wrought
 Within her musing spirit there :
 Meekly the Christian's God she sought ;
 Sweet to the teacher as the taught
 Those holy hours of praise and prayer !
 As, rim by rim, and hue by hue,
 The shells of inner ocean grow ;
 So, deep in Conrad's bosom grew
 A feeling he might scarcely know,
 Until the waves of passion bore
 Its finished beauty to the shore ;
 And much he marvelled so to see
 His own heart's birth of mystery.
 Enough—they loved !—the narrow cell
 Became a palace, and the waste
 A paradise, where angels dwell,
 By fear and sorrow undefaced ;
 Alas that, as in Eden's bowers,
 The serpent lurked beneath the flowers !

'Twas eve—before the shrine, apart,
 The sire held commune with his heart ;
 At dawn, upon the maiden's head,
 Should, by his reverend hands, be shed
 Those waters by whose living tide
 The soul is cleansed and sanctified ;
 Fitly to meet so high a rite,
 He prayed and fasted through the night.
 Before the chapel's lowly gate
 In sweet discourse the lovers sate,
 Or silence sweeter still, whereby
 Eye spake, with eloquence, to eye.

The twilight heavens were spread above,
One stedfast sheet of pallid blue ;
And wailing, like forsaken love,
The wind among the mountains blew ;
The waves came heavily and slow,
Like measured steps of patient woe ;
And on the far horizon's rim
The severed clouds lay low and dim,
Like crests of phantom-bands afar,
Slow rising, and portending war.
It was an eve to hold the breath,
And muse how life but leads to death !

"Oh, come, beloved!" the maiden said ;
"Seek we that blessed spot again,
Where by thy ruthless hand I bled,
And won this rapture by that pain ;
Fain would I tread, secure with thee,
Haunts of forgotten sorcery !"

They wandered forth, and, as they went,
The grey clouds slowly towered around,
And the wild breeze's low lament
Was by the wrestling billows drowned ;
"Nay, fairest, turn !" Sir Conrad said ;
But Ella tossed her graceful head,
Like steed that on the blast can hear
A tone familiar to his ear,
And strangely did her eye's vague light
Fall on the spirit of the knight ;
"Onward !" she cried ; and "onward !" still
Faint echoes answered from the hill.

And now, their noiseless footsteps fall
Upon the forest's shadowed floor,

Where sombre fir-trees, black and tall,
 Rustle in winds that sweep the shore;
 And with that leafy murmur seemed
 A sound of hollow laughter blent,
 And wan, and white, and fitful streamed
 The struggling moonshine as they went,
 Where'er the parting boughs unshroud
 A sky all dark with gathering cloud!

“No earthly storm is rising here!”

Sir Conrad cried; “oh, turn thee back!”

“Fear'st thou?—for me, I know not fear!”

She said, and shook her tresses black;

And half in shame, and half in love,

Still at her side the knight must move.

And now they reach that well-known place,
 Amid the clustered trees a space
 Where bare above their heads are seen
 The wheeling clouds that veil the skies,
 And the roar of waves is heard between
 The shrieking wind's appalling cries;
 Yet through the tumult, low and chill,
 That hollow laugh is ringing still!
 Ah, see! a sudden flash!—ah, gaze!
 What hideous sights its gleam betrays!
 A thousand shapes around them stand,
 With mocking lip and beckoning hand;
 They move, they circle, they advance,
 They weave a wild and spectral dance,
 Closing around the hapless pair,
 With howls that cleave the startled air!
 With arms outstretched, and face upraised,
 The maiden gazed, and, as she gazed,

The mocking smile, the phantom-stare,
Were mirrored in her face so fair;
And her wild eyes, so wide, so bright,
Grew less than human in their light!

From her lover's arm she burst—
She hath joined the troop accurst!—
Through the rising of the storm

Her ghastly laughter rings,
And she seems a spectre-form,
And she treads as if on wings.

She is here and she is there,
Like a bubble on the air,
Rising, sinking, seen—but such,
That it melts beneath the touch;
So she passes from his hands:

'Tis a fir-branch in his hold!
Helpless, hopeless, now he stands;
And the night grows black and cold;

And the phantom-voices die,
And the wind sinks down in sleep,
And beneath a calmèd sky

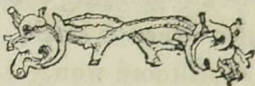
He kneels alone to weep;
For the spectre-forms have past
With the rushing of the blast;
And the solitude around
Hath neither shape nor sound!

There, when roseate morning shone,
Still the hapless warrior knelt,
But his face was still and wan,
And his woes were all unfelt;
Yet his crucifix was prest
(Blessed sign!) against his breast.

Ah, when first he wandered there,
 Had love left him time for prayer,
 Fiend and spell had sunken down,
 Powerless as an infant's frown!

Sadly, in that spot of gloom,
 Reared his sire his lowly tomb,
 Murmuring, with a heavy heart,
 "The old remain—the young depart!"
 As he spake, in mournful trust,
 "Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"
 Still at every solemn word
 Was a distant wailing heard,
 Like a wolf's low howl of pain,
 When its little ones are slain.—
 Oft, on winter's sombre eyes,
 Stealing through the shivering leaves,
 Rose that sound, still lingering round
 That lone spot of holy ground;
 Where, unhonoured and unknown,
 Calmly slept the hermit-knight,
 Underneath the cold white stone,
 Graven with these words of might—
 "Ye who tread the narrow track,
 Frail, trembling, sinful—*look not back!*"

S. M.



Odin's Sacrifice.

A TALE OF NORWAY.

THERE is silence in the land —
 There is silence on the hills ;
 Bound as with an icy band,
 Which the deep heart stuns and chills,
 Are the valleys and the woods,
 And the mountain solitudes :
 For its snake-like arms around
 The black pestilence hath wound ;
 And within its dire embrace
 Earth and heaven grow sick and reel,
 Even like one across whose face
 Death's approaching shadows steal.

Over hill and over plain
 Doth that deadly monarch reign ;
 Every green and cool recess
 Where Earth hides her loveliness ;
 Every rich and boastful bower
 Where she lavishes her power ;
 Every ancient hill whose brow
 Hath its crown of fadeless snow ;
 Every forest soft and deep,
 Where the weary breezes sleep,
 Own his sway, and all appear
 Mute with cold expectant fear,
 Standing still, as if to view
 What their awful king will do.

Even the streams more slowly creep,
 Not to break Earth's dreamless sleep ;
 Even the birds the woods among
 Whisper forth a stifled song ;

And old Ocean's mighty breast
Every murmur hath suppress;
For he knows the hour to be
Of a mightier one than he.

The scornful cataract alone
Sinks not its rejoicing tone;
O'er yon airy cliff it swings
With its wild and eager springs,
Tossing foam-drops to the sky
With a loud exulting cry,
Like the prodigal, whose soul
Drowneth sorrow in the bowl;
Why should such a chorus cease,
That Death may do his work in peace?

But man — weak man! — the tenant pale
Of a scene so waste and drear,
Mute are all; for even the wail
Of bitter grief is hushed in fear;
Up and down the city-streets,
Each man that his neighbour meets
Hurries shrinking by the place,
Gazing up into his face
With a wild and wistful eye,
As if he looked to see him die;
And the women patient sit
Awaiting death — not dreading it,
For each one of them would fain
Join some well-beloved again:
This comfort have that mournful throng,
They are not doomed to tarry long.

Two short weeks their course have run
Since the grisly Plague begun,

And so well his work is done
That living men are not enow
Even their dead to bury now;
Yet unslaked is still his thirst,
His arm unwearied as at first;
All that work of Death so grim
Seems but as a sport to him,
Still he wears his wrathful frown,
Still he strikes his thousands down.

Not a sound is on the air,
Save before the temple, where
Some have gathered them for prayer.
With white lip and shaking hand
Round about its walls they stand,
For the priest is yet within,
Ere the solemn rites begin
He is kneeling at the throne
Of the angry god, alone,
Seeking if his prayer or spell,
Muttered hymn or canticle,
May avail to wring reply
From that stern Divinity.
Six long days and nights I ween
In that temple hath he been,
Watching with unsleeping eyes
From meek eve to bright sunrise;
From fair dawn till day is spent,
Till that ruthless god relent;
Till by sign or symbol dim
He reveal his will to him,
And commit to priestly hands
The sacrifice his wrath demands,

So that when the debt is paid
May the deadly plague be stayed.

All the people stand without
In a wild and ghastly doubt,
Each one shuddering lest he
May the newest victim be ;
Every ear awaiting still
Till great Odin speak his will.
Foremost of that pallid band
Does their sorrowing monarch stand ;
Many a tear hath dimmed his eye
That his children round him die ;
Powerless is his sceptre now,
And the circlet on his brow,
And the sword which won that ring
(Marks of warrior and of king),
Seem but as in mockery worn
By some captive crowned in scorn :
Little will his pomp have won him
If the plague but breathe upon him !

Lo, the gates are moving slow —
Lo, the priest is coming now —
See how all that awestruck throng,
Who have waited for him long,
Shrink and cower, as if they fear
Only a certain doom to hear !
One or two in sudden dread
From the place all madly fled,
While their wild and hollow shriek
Whitened every hearer's cheek,
If the cheeks death-pale before,
Could put on one whiteness more ;

But their king, who sate alone
 On a grey and mossy stone
 Nearest to the temple-gate,
 Shrank not from the word of Fate :
 See, he lifts his hero-eye,
 A spirit not afraid to die
 Speaks through it unquenchably !
 Only one of that pale troop
 Had a soul that could not stoop ;
 Only one, a heart whose power
 Was sufficient for that hour ;
 Hearts are frail when hope is gone—
 Be we thankful there was *one*.

“ Speak ! ” that kingly voice exclaimed—

“ Speak ! but ere thou speakest, hear !
 And the vow my soul hath framed

I will pour into thine ear.
 Let great Odin say his will,
 I that mandate will fulfil—
 Ay, though he bid me cast in dust
 The sword in which my people trust,
 And from my brow dishonoured tear
 The diadem whose place is there ;
 I will obey him still, and stand
 A crownless king in mine own land,
 And with your homage ye may grace
 Another monarch in my place ;
 If for such sacrifice he deign
 To grant my people health again.
 Speak ! I am purposed to obey—
 Speak ! and I fling my crown away ;
 Only the kingdom of my heart
 Can but with my life depart.”

Mute his people listened ; each
 Had a heart too full for speech ;
 Dark the days when such a word
 Could be with such silence heard !
 Then the solemn priest advanced,
 Slow his step—his eye entranced ;
 For even yet that lifted eye
 Held converse with the Deity ;
 And his words full wildly stream,
 Void of consciousness they seem
 As if spoken in a dream :
 Other power than man's, I trow,
 Lords it o'er his utterance now.

THE PRIEST'S SPEECH.*

"Odin hath spoken! The King of Heaven
 Answer dark to my prayer hath given ;
 Odin hath spoken a fearful thing—
 Hear, O people! and hear, O king!
 While the vow which ye so lately heard
 Is in the far sky registered.
 Woe be to him, whose heart afraid
 Shrinks from the vow his lips have made!
 Weary life shall the doomed one lead,
 And his grasp, when life is fled,
 Never shall take the bowl of mead
 From the hand of the mighty dead:
 An honourless death shall lay him low—
 Woe! for my lips have said it—woe!"

The wild priest tossed his arms on high,
 And his words went echoing through the sky ;

Through its wide blue halls resounding go
The doom of shame and the words of woe;
Till the people bowed to the soulless air,
And dreamed that Odin was speaking there!
Then ceased the tone of that awful strain,
And the wild priest opened his lips again.

THE PRIEST'S SPEECH CONTINUED.

“ Within the temple I watched alone,
I knelt before the war-god's throne;
Night and day I fasted there—
Night and day I spent in prayer;
But still the idol, sternly cold,
Looked down upon me as of old;
Not a word and not a sign
Gave answer to those prayers of mine!
Till as the sixth and latest night
Spread its curtains o'er the light,
While twilight's dusky shadows stole
Like whispered spells upon the soul;
I rose and paced the pavement chill,
Muttering many a rhyme of power,
And shuddering, as around me still
The gloom of that mysterious hour
Was closing, and the cell I trod
Alone with the giant and speechless god!

Was it a cloud from the changing sky
That cheated my bewildered eye?
Not a voice nor a breath was heard,
But it seemed to me that Odin stirred!
My heart grew cold, for I thought that he
Was coming to claim his prey in me!

Down I kneeled in the night alone,
 I hid my face on the altar-stone,
 For I dared not lift mine eyes to look
 On a sight no mortal gaze might brook ;
 And as I kneeled in the twilight there,
 Veiling my face in awe-struck prayer,
 A deep deep voice of no human sound
 All thundering shook the walls around,
 And the war-god spake this word of fear :—
 Give ear, O people ! O king, give ear !

THE DECREE OF ODIN.

I loosened the bonds which bind
 The Pestilence, my slave ;
 I sent him forth as the wind,
 And I bade him stand in the midst of the land,
 And make it one wide grave !

Well hath his work been done ;
 But it is doing still !
 Scarce is the task begun,
 And the dead shall sink and the living shrink,
 Till achieved is Odin's will.

The monarch must resign
 That which he loveth best,
 It must bleed before my shrine !
 And then will I chain the fierce Plague again,
 And the vexed land shall have rest."

The tones of that strange voice have ceased,
 Mute are the people and the priest ;
 But a weight of horror lies
 On their wild and staring eyes.

Silently they stood and heard ;
But, as died the last dread word,
A greyness, like a sudden cloud,
Fell on some of that pale crowd,
As if a storm-cloud left its trace
Upon each uplifted face ;
Yet the sky is calm and fair,
Not a passing mist is there ;
Each one looked in the other's eye
Askingly and fearfully ;
Past that moment's shuddering doubt,
" The plague !—the hideous plague !" they shout,
And some take flight, and some stand still,
But the grasp of death is icy chill ;
One touch goes freezing to their hearts,
And hurrying life at once departs ;
Till the very steps at the temple-door
Are piled with corpses o'er and o'er ;
And the monarch veils his face and cries,
" Great Odin ! take thy sacrifice !"

There stood a child at the monarch's knee,
A fair and bright-haired boy was he ;
His young blue eyes had never yet
Aught save the glance of kindness met,
Nor, save with passing tears, been wet.
His heart like an opening rose-bud grew,
Nourished with gentle beams and dew ;
And his lisping tongue had never known
Aught save a blythe and a fearless tone.
Wonder and terror he now might feel,
But his father's arm was a fence of steel ;
He was the child of hope and care,
The only one, and the kingdom's heir ;

And he thought as he stood at his father's knee,
 "There is none on earth that can injure me."

But the stern and ruthless priest drew near
 With an eye whose gaze was *felt*,
 An eye that never shed a tear,
 And a heart that could not melt :
 He laid his grasp on the child's soft neck,
 And the shuddering father dared not check ;
 He lifted the knife—but the princely child
 Looked boldly up in his face and smiled ;
 Each cheek around was pale with woe,
 But the boy's blue eye no fear confessed ;
 It was his father who let him go,
 So he held it all for a passing jest.

Whence came that shriek which rings around ?
 A heart is breaking in the sound ;
 'Twas not the child—he smileth still
 Up in the face of the man of ill ;
 'Twas not the father—the hero sits
 With a heart that speaks not, but submits ;
 And all so stern is his changeless brow,
 Ye would not dream he was feeling now :
 Whose is this darting form that flies
 Swift as the wind through wintry skies,
 With floating hair and with flashing eye,
 Whose beauty is lost in agony ?
 Make way, make way, for that form so wild—
 It is the mother of the child !

She hath caught the boy to her breast !
 One instant's short embrace,

Wildly and closely his form she prest,
But she dared not see his face!
One look had taken her strength away
For the deed she had to do that day;
So she turned away when her clasp had ceased,
And thus she spake to the ruthless priest:

“ Man of blood! thou hast strangely erred,
If Odin's will aright was heard;
He hath demanded the dearest thing
That dwells in the heart of the grieving king;
Away from the innocent babe! Away!
I am the victim thy sword must slay!
I am the love of his youth;— we changed
Hearts which no coldness hath since estranged;
I am the wife of his bosom— see,
His cheek is losing its glow for me;
The brightness fleets from his tearful eye,
His brow forgetteth its royalty;
I am the dearest, for I can chase
The soul of strength from the hero's face;
Look on his cheek so pale and wild!
He changed not thus when ye took his child.”

The priest stood still; there seemed a trace
Of transient pity on his face—
With breathless heart, with trembling knees,
That pause of doubt the mother sees;
No monarch, crowned with victor's wreath,
E'er clung to life as she to death.
Paler and paler her cheek hath grown,
As she turned to the king and thus spake on:

“Dost thou not love me?” she said, and soft
 Was her young low voice, and it trembled oft;
 The light of her eye was troubled, yet
 ’Twas not with a single teardrop wet;
 Those waters of the heart’s deep well
 Were frozen in their shivering cell.

“Dost thou not love me?—Forgettest thou
 When first I gave thee my girlish vow?
 Hast thou forgotten the calm bright time

When our two young hearts were together twining?
 Hast thou forgotten love’s dewy prime,

Now when its noon is above thee shining?

Will thy cold eye no change evince?

Have I been faithless to thee since?

Have I not still, as thine own true wife,

Smiled on thy manhood’s sterner life?

And has not love in our two hearts made

A world of youth that can never fade?

Did ever a breath of unkindness pass

Over the lake of our love so fair,

Which mirrored back like a faithful glass

The brightness and beauty that round it were?

Oh, by the hours of peace and stillness,

Which our true wedded faith hath known,

Turn not away with such icy chillness!

Turn not away—I am still thine own!

Or has some spell than thy love proved stronger?

Oh, there’s no spell that could conquer mine!

Speak to me, speak! are we *one* no longer?

Dost thou not love me?—Am I not thine?”

The voice of her passionate pleading died,

Like a breeze that its sweetness forth hath sighed;

But oh, what a storm did that wind's light wing
Wake in the bosom of the king!

Up he sprang, and 'twas fearful to see

How the hero's soul was mastered there,

How his brow grew dark with agony,

And his lip grew pallid with despair.

Low was his voice, and of faltering tone :

“ Gudruna! Gudruna! come back, mine own!

Touch her not, priest! she is mine—forbear!

Take ye the child, but the mother spare!”

“ Heard ye? Oh, heard ye?” the mother cries,

And the quick tears break from her joyful eyes;

“ My prayer is won, and my truth is proved,

Take me—for I am his heart's beloved!”

Wildly she spake, and hurried where

The priest was lifting his knife in air!—

* * * * *

In her own life-blood she lies,

She lies at the monarch's feet,

And her heart looks up into his eyes

With a loving gaze, and sweet.

In mute despair he stands,

He wrings his mailèd hands,

And he looks from her face to the pitiless sky,

And feels that he must see her die!

For death is glazing fast

Those eyes of tenderest blue,

The words she speaks must be her last,

Hurried, and faint, and few;

But her ebbing strength she mustereth

To wring one moment more from death;

And a faint tinge trembles on her cheeks

As thus her dying love she speaks :

“ Weep not for me, O dearest one !
Forget not how I fell,
Dying, the mother for the son—
My heart’s beloved, farewell !
What bliss was for my spirit kept,
To live thus loved, and die thus wept !”

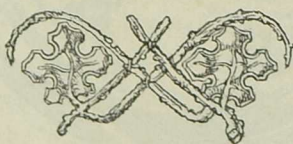
Her spirit passed with the last soft word,
And a voice of weeping around was heard ;
The monarch clasped his wondering boy,
And hid his face in the child’s bright hair,
For he would not that his people’s eye
Should look on the burst of his despair.

In the same spot they buried her,
And the rose’s mountain bloom
Clustered around, to minister
Sweetness to her lowly tomb ;
And the breeze at morn and eve
Ever loved to linger there,
With its softest notes to grieve
Over one so pure and fair ;
And for many an after-year
All that sorrowing people came
Casting garlands on her bier,
Doing honour to her name ;
For the pestilence had ceased,
And grim Odin was appeased.
Never did the monarch take
Other maiden for his bride,
Lonely lived he for her sake,
Lonely, at the last, he died :
How should any other be
Half so fond and true as she ?

Oh, the might of the strength that dwells apart
In the deep, deep cells of a woman's heart!
Little we know it, and man may deem
It is but the tale of an idle dream;
But there are springs which are never dry,
But flow on in silence, exhaustlessly;
And there are chords which if once ye sound them,
The heart where they dwell will shiver round them;
And there are feelings whose lightest breath
Can madden in life and can nerve for death!

Ask ye what was the power that gave
To a heart so soft a soul so brave,
A spirit so strong to a form so frail,
As hers whose deed hath been my tale?
Ask ye? Oh, tame must ye be, and cold,
To whom such secrets need be *told!*
Would ye the source of her strength explore?
She was a mother!—There needs no more.

S. M.





Genoveva.

Genoveva.

PART THE FIRST.

Now hearken, lords and ladies gay,
 And ye shall understand
 The wonders of a legend-lay
 From the old German land.
 She, of my song, in Eden's bowers
 A sainted lady lies,
 And wears a chaplet of the flowers
 That grow in Paradise.

Her father gloried in her birth,
 That daughter of his fame ;
 The sweetest sound he knew on earth
 Was Genoveva's name.
 She dwelt, a fair and holy child,
 Beside her mother's knee ;
 She grew, a maiden meek and mild,
 And pure as pure could be.

And so it was, that when the maid
 Fulfilled her childhood's vow,
 Saint Hildorf's lifted hands were laid
 Upon no lovelier brow.
 And said they, as along the aisle
 The knights and ladies poured,
 How will she brighten with her smile
 The castle of her lord !

Right soon a stately champion came
 For that bright damsel's hand,
 The sound of County Siegfried's fame
 Was sung in many a land.

He came, he knelt, he wooed, he won,
As warriors win the bride ;
Duke Pfalz hath hailed him as his son,
At Genoveva's side.

Then might you hear the matin-bell
With echoes low and sweet,
Where, at Saint Hildorf's sacred cell,
The youth and maiden meet.
And, hark, they plight the mystic vow,
The troth that time shall try,
When years have worn the beamy brow,
And quenched the laughing eye.

Now turn we to the castle-gate,
Wreathed with the peaceful vine,
Where County Siegfried holds his state,
Beside the Rhine — the Rhine.
They bring white blossoms from the bowers,
The rose-leaves hide the ground ;—
Ah, gentle dame, beneath the flowers
The coiling worm is found !

Yet day by day went bounding on,
Nor would the warrior roam ;
The brightness of his lady shone
Throughout Lord Siegfried's home.
She was the garland of his days,
His blessing and his fame ;
His happy hearth hath won the praise
Of Genoveva's name.

But, hark, that stern and sudden sound
Along the castle-wall ;
It shook the echo from the ground,
That startling trumpet-call.

“To arms! to horse!—the Moor! the Moor!
 His pagan banners fly;
 The Spaniard and the Frank implore
 Thy German chivalry!”

Then might you see at break of day
 The stately Siegfried stand
 Harnessed, and in his old array,
 His good sword in his hand.
 “And fare thee well,” the soldier said,
 “My lady bright and dear.”
 He spake, and bent his haughty head
 To hide a warrior’s tear.

“Farewell!—And thou, my Castellain,
 My liegeman true and tried,
 Shield, till thy lord shall turn again,
 My lady and my bride.—
 And ye, good Saints, with unseen eyes,
 Watch her in solemn care;
 An angel well might leave the skies
 At Genoveva’s prayer!”

PART THE SECOND.

Ah, woe is me, and well-a-day!
 What scenes of sorrow rise!
 And, hark, the music of my lay
 Must breathe the breath of sighs.
 That guardian—he of trusty fame,
 He seeks a deed abhorred,
 He woos to sorrow and to shame
 The lady of his lord.

But she, fair Genoveva, stands
 A pure and peerless bride,
 Her angel lifts his sheltering hands
 For ever at her side ;—
 She kneels—she breathes some simple verse,
 Taught by her mother's care ;
 And the good saints in heaven rehearse
 The gentle lady's prayer.

Yet strife and anguish lasted long,
 Till he—that fiendish man,
 The anger of his sin was strong,
 And thus his fury ran :—
 “ Bind ye this foul and wanton dame,
 False to my master's bed,
 Hide in the earth both sin and shame ;
 Her blood be on her head !”

They took the stern command he gave,
 Two vassals fierce and rude ;
 They bare her for a nameless grave,
 Far in a distant wood ;—
 There knelt she down and meekly prayed,
 In language soft and mild,—
 “ I bear beneath my breast,” she said,
 “ Your lord, Count Siegfried's child !

Then let me tarry but awhile,
 Far, far from earthly eye,
 That I may see my infant smile,
 And lay me down and die :
 Nay, spare me, in sweet Mary's name,
 Who stood by Jesu's cross ;—
 He from a mother's bosom came,
 That He might die for us !”

They melted at the voice they heard ;
They left her lonely there ;
The holy angels helped her word,
There is such force in prayer !
There wandered she, where that wild wood
A tangled pathway gave,
Till, lo, in secret solitude,
A deep and mossy cave —

A source of quiet waters shone
Along a shadowy glade,
And branches, fair to look upon,
A dreamy shelter made.
Her eyes are closed, but not in sleep,—
She bends, but not to pray,—
Thrilled with the woes that mothers weep,
The lonely lady lay.

She sees — what is it nestling near ?
A soft fair form is nigh —
She hears — sweet Lord, what doth she hear ?
A low and infant cry !
It is her son ! her son ! the child,
The first-born of her vow ;
See, in his face his father smiled,
He bears Lord Siegfried's brow !

Good angels, 'twas a sight to see
That cavern dark and wild —
The nameless stream — the silent tree —
The mother and her child.
And, hark, he weeps ; that voice of tears
Proclaims a child of earth ;
Oh, what shall soothe, for holier years,
The sorrow of his birth !

There was no font, no sacred shrine,
No servant of the Lord,—
The waters of the mystic sign
A mother's hand hath poured.
She breathed on him a word of woes,
His life in tears begun ;
The name a Hebrew mother chose,
Benoni, sorrow's son.

But ah, what miseries betide
A mother and her pains !
Her child must die—for famine dried
The fountain of her veins.
She saw the anguish of his face,
She heard his bitter cry,
And went forth from that woeful place,—
She could not see him die !

Yet still, again her feet must turn
Back to that cavern wild,—
Yea, even in death she fain would yearn
Once more upon her child.
What doth she see? A fair young doe
A mother's task hath done ;
Bent at his side, her milk must flow
To soothe the lady's son.

She wept—she wept—she could no less—
Tears sweet and grateful ran ;
The mute thing of the wilderness
Hath softer heart than man !
She came—that wild deer of the herd,
Moved by some strange control,
There was a mystic touch that stirred
The yearnings of her soul.

And there they dwelt, the gentle three,
In peace, if not in joy,
Until he stood beside her knee,
A fair and thoughtful boy.
The doe—the lady—and the youth,
Seven long and weary years;
Their calm and patient life—in sooth
It was a sight for tears.

She fed him with the forest-fruits
That summer-branches gave;
She gathered wild and wholesome roots
To cheer their wintry cave:
They drank from that fair fountain's bed,
Whose faithful waters run
Bright as when first his name they shed,
Benoni, sorrow's son!

And she hath framed, with chosen boughs,
A simple cross of wood,
And taught the lad his childhood's vows
To Jesu, mild and good:
He learnt the legend of the Cross;
How Mary's blessed Son
Came down from Heaven to die for us,
And peace and pardon won.

He heard that shadowy angels roam
Along the woodland dell,
To lead the blessed to a home
Where saints and martyrs dwell.
So when the lady wept and prayed,
He soothed her secret sighs:
"Sweet mother, let us die," he said,
"And rest in Paradise."

“Alas, my son, my tender son!
What wilt thou do,” she sighed,
“When I, thy mother, shall be gone?
Thou hast no friend beside!
There is thy Sire by heavenly birth,
His love is strong and sure;
But he—thy father of the earth—
He spurns thee from his door!”

“Nay, tell me, mother dear,” he said,
“I pray thee tell to me,
Are they not all men gone and dead,
Except thy son and thee?”

“Ah, no! there be, my gentle child,
Whole multitudes afar;
Yet it is happier in this wild
Than where their dwellings are!
They cast me out to woe and shame,
Here in this den to hide;
They blighted Genoveva’s name,
Lord Siegfried’s chosen bride.
But soon the weary will have rest;
I breathe with failing breath;
There is within thy mother’s breast
The bitterness of death.”

“Then, mother kind, in thy dark grave
Alone thou shalt not lie,
Before our cross, here in this cave,
Together let us die.
Yea, let me look on no man’s face,
Since such stern hearts there be,
But here, in this our lonely place,
Here will I die with thee.”

Ah, noble heart! thy words are sooth,
I breathe their sound again;
Better to pass away in youth,
Than live with bearded men.
And thou, the lady of his birth,
Farewell! a calm farewell, —
Thou wert not meant for this vile earth,
But with the saints to dwell.

PART THE THIRD.

Mark ye, how spear and helmet glare,
And red-cross banners shine,
While thrilling trumpets cleave the air,
Along the Rhine — the Rhine!
Count Siegfried from the wars is come,
And gathering vassals wait
To welcome the stern warrior home
To his own castle-gate.

But where is she — his joy, his pride,
The garland of his fame?
Away! away! her image hide,
He cannot brook her name!
Yet soon the whispered words are breathed,
And faithful lips declare,
How a vile serpent's folds were wreathed
Around their lady fair.

They tell his vassal's treacherous crime,
The bow his malice bent,
Till Genoveva, in her prime,
Had perished innocent.

Alas, what torrent-tears must roll,
In fierce and angry shower!
Oh, what shall soothe Count Siegfried's soul
In that o'erwhelming hour!

He hides him in some vaulted room,
Far from the light of day,
He will not look on beauty's bloom,
Nor hear the minstrel's lay.
They try him with the trumpet-sound
On many an echoing morn,
They tempt him forth with hawk and hound,
And breathe the hunter's horn.

They loose the gazehound from the chain,
They bring both steed and spear;
Lord Siegfried's hand must rule the rein,
And rouse the ruddy deer.

On through the wild the war-horse bounds
Beneath his stately form,
He charges 'mid those rushing hounds,
With footsteps like the storm.

"Down, Donner, down! hold, Hubert, hold!"
What is yon sight of fear?

A strange wild youth—a maiden bold—
That guard the panting deer!
A fleecy skin was folded round
Her breast, with woman's pride,
And some dead fawn the youth had found,—
He wears its dappled hide.

"Who, whence are ye?" the warrior said,
"That haunt this secret cave?
Ha! is it so? and do the dead
Come from their hollow grave?"

“ I live—I breathe the breath of life—
No evil have I done—
I am thy true, thy chosen wife,
And this is Siegfried’s son !”

He stood, as severed souls may stand,
At first, when forth they fare,
And shadowy forms, a stranger band,
Will greet them in the air:
He bounds—he binds her to his heart,
His own, his rescued bride ;
No more, oh, never more to part,
Even death shall not divide !

See now, they move along the wild
With solemn feet and slow,
The warrior and his graceful child,
The lady and the doe !
They stand before the castle-gate,
Rich with the clustering vine ;
Again shall Siegfried hold his state,
Beside the Rhine—the Rhine !

They come—they haste from many a land,
For fast the tidings spread,
And there doth Genoveva stand,
Bright as the arisen dead.
Her mother weeps—by God’s dear grace
Glad tears are in her eye ;
Duke Pfalz hath seen his daughter’s face,
And now—now let him die.

Yea, from his calm and distant cell
The sainted Hildorf came,
His spirit bowed beneath the spell
Of Genoveva’s name.

He came—he sought that solemn cave,
 The lady's patient home—
 He measured it with aisle and nave,
 He shaped a shadowy dome.

He knelt in votive solitude,
 He fixed both saint and sign,
 And bade them build in that lone wood
 A fair and stately shrine.
 There might you read for many an age,
 In the rich window's ray,
 Traced as along some pictured page,
 The legend of my lay.

The image of their youth was there,
 The bridegroom and the bride—
 The porch where Genoveva fair
 Knelt at her Siegfried's side.
 There, through the storied glass, the scene
 In molten beauty falls,
 When she with mild and matron-mien
 Shone in her husband's halls.

There was the cave, the wood, the stream,
 In radiance soft and warm,
 And evermore the noonday beam
 Came through some angel's form.
 The youth was shewn in that wild dress,
 His mother's cross he bare;
 Saint John in the old wilderness
 Was not more strangely fair.

But where they breathe their holiest vows,
 And eastern sunbeams fall,
 A simple cross of woodland boughs
 Stands by the chancel-wall.

It is the lady's lonely sign,
By mournful fingers made;
The selfsame symbol decks the shrine
That soothed the cavern's shade.

Behind yon altar, reared on high,
A lady breathes in stone,
A sculptured deer is couching nigh,
An infant weeps alone.
A word is there—but not of woe—
One voice, a prayer to claim;
Beneath the lady and the doe
Is GENOVEVA's name!

Thus lived, thus loved she; and she died—
But old, and full of days.
Ask ye how time and truth have tried
The legend of her praise?
She of my song in Eden's bowers
A sainted lady lies,
And wears a garland of the flowers
That grow in Paradise.

R. S. H.



To my Friends.

SCHILLER.

My friends! there have been fairer days than ours,
 The past hath gathered more illustrious hours;
 For even if silence dwelt on history's page,
 The stones which men unbosom from the sod
 Would borrow tongues to tell how once there trod
 A race of heroes in a nobler age.

But 'tis past, 'tis gone! we cannot win it
 Back from its silent rest;
 We—we *live*! Ours is each passing minute!
 Our portion is the best!

My friends! there yet are fairer climes than ours,
 Bright lands, with sky all sun, and turf all flowers—
 So doth the tale of many a wanderer say.

But if, what Nature to our soil denies,
 Her sister Art's more bounteous hand supplies,
 Let us rejoice beneath that tempered ray!

If here the laurel scorn to bloom,
 And winter seals the myrtle's doom;
 Yet may we round our temples twine
 The clusters of the hardier vine.

Earth's greatness holds her court on other shores,
 Where twice two worlds display their treasure-stores,
 Where father Thames unfolds his waters fair;
 There, thousand vessels pass in beauty by,
 There are all costly sights to tempt the eye,
 And gold, the god of earth, is mighty there.

But never is the sunlight seen
 In tossing waves that foam and break;
 Tranquil brooklets, still and sheen,
 These his chosen mirror make.

The very beggar at the angel's gate¹
Can boast a pomp above our Northern state ;
He looks on Rome — eternal, only, Rome !
All beauty to his eager gaze is given,
Where, like a second heaven within the heaven,
St. Peter rears his wide and wondrous dome.
But Rome in all her majesty
Is but the grave of days gone by ;
There's life in the more lowly flowers
Which crown for us the verdant hours.

Ay, friends! in other regions may appear
A greater life than fills our humble sphere ;
But there is nothing new beneath the sky ;
And, lo, upon the world's successive stage
We see the greatness of each passing age
Gather itself into our treasury.

While repetition is our earthly lot,
Still fancy shines in youth's eternal day ;
That which in time or place existeth not,
That only, time is powerless to decay !

S. M.

¹ Porta Angelica, Rome.



Part III.



Prince Eugene.

PRINCE Eugene once in Suabia paid visits far and wide,
And 'mong the rest to Reutlingen this favour did betide.
Now, what a stir the hero made my verses scarce can tell,
Or how the honour to express that to the mayor fell,
As he a council gathered quick to signify the same,
And by some act to shew his sense of Eugene's mighty
name.

Much argued they what best to do, or what was best to say;
Whether with shouts and cheers to hail the hero on his way,
With feast and dance to bid him speed, and tell his great
renown, [crown :
Or with the victor's golden wreath his honoured brows to

Long the debate and eloquent that hatched the bright design,
To pledge him in a flowing cup of famed Reutlingen wine.
And now unto the prince they brought a bowl with
quantum suff.

Of this true wine of Reutlingen—right sour and nauseous
stuff!

With heart of grace Prince Eugene quick despatched the
potion down,

Though sorely rued he on such terms to gratify the town.

“Ay,” thought the cits, to see him so imbibe their griping
wine,

“That beaker had the genuine smack, by such a potent sign;
Haste, bring another, quick as thought, a bowl both large
and wide,

That now the prince our famous wine may quaff in flowing
tide!”

Alas, poor prince, how ached thy jaws to hear so dire a
speech!

As if his latest hour were come, he gravely did beseech
To taste no more in hall or bower of such a nauseous stuff,
Of which I wot he felt right well his skin had *quantum suff.*

With thanks and bows Prince Eugene then addressed the
mayor’s train:

“Much rather, honoured councillors, I’d storm Belgrade
again,

Than face another such a draught of sour Reutlingen wine.
Take my advice, if stuff like this you swallow when you dine,
Drink it, and welcome, but to ask your luckless guests
refrain;

For rather, through the smoke and flame, I’d storm Bel-
grade again.”

The Enchanted Net.

COULD we only give credit to half we are told,
 There were sundry strange monsters existing of old;
 For, without our disturbing those very large bones—
 Which have turned (for the rhyme's sake, perhaps) into
 stones,

 And have chosen to wait a
 Long while hid in strata,
 While old Time has been dining on empires and thrones—
 (Old bones and dry bones,
 Leg-bones and thigh-bones,
 Bones of the vertebræ, bones of the tail,
 Very like, only more so, the bones of a whale,
 Bones that were very long, bones that were very short,
 They have never as yet found a real fossil merry-thought,
 Perchance because mastodons, burly and big,
 Considered all funny bones quite *infra dig.*)
 Skulls have they found in strange places imbedded,
 Which at least prove their owners were very long-headed;
 And other queer things,—which it's not my intention,
 Lest I weary your patience, at present to mention,
 As I think I can prove, without farther apology,
 What I said to be true sans appeal to geology,
 That there lived in the good old days gone by
 Things unknown to our modern philosophy,
 And a giant was then no more out of the way,
 Than a dwarf is now in the present day.

Sir Eppo of Epstein was young, brave, and fair;
 Dark were the curls of his clustering hair,
 Dark the moustache that o'ershadowed his lip,
 And his glance was as keen as the sword at his hip;

Though the enemy's charge was like lightning's fierce shock,
 His seat was as firm as the wave-beaten rock ;
 And woe to the foeman whom pride or mischance
 Opposed to the stroke of his conquering lance.
 He carved at the board, and he danced in the hall,
 And the ladies admired him—each one and all :
 In a word, I should say he appears to have been
 As nice a young "ritter" as ever was seen.

He could not read nor write,
 He could not spell his name ;
 Towards being a clerk, Sir Eppo his + mark
 Was as near as he ever came.
 He had felt no vexation
 From multiplication ;
 Never puzzled was he
 By the rule of three ;
 The practice he'd had
 Did not drive him mad,
 Because it all lay
 Quite a different way.
 The asses' bridge, that bridge of sighs,
 Had (lucky dog!) ne'er met his eyes.

In a very few words, he expressed his intention
 Once for all to decline every Latin declension,
 When persuaded to add, by the good Father Herman,
 That most classical tongue to his own native German.

And no doubt he was right in

Point of fact, for a knight in

Those days was supposed to like nothing but fighting ;
 And one who had learned any language that is hard,
 Would have stood a good chance of being burned for a
 wizard.

Education, being then never pushed to the verge ye
Now see it, was chiefly confined to the clergy.

'Twas a southerly wind and a cloudy sky,
For aught that I know to the contrary;
If it wasn't, it ought to have been properly,
As it's certain Sir Eppo, his feather-bed scorning,
Thought that *something* proclaimed it a fine hunting
morning;

So pronouncing his benison
O'er a cold haunch of venison,
He floored the best half, drank a gallon of beer,
And set out on the Taunus to chase the wild deer.

Sir Eppo he rode through the good green wood,
And his bolts flew fast and free;
He knocked over a hare, and he passed the lair
(The tenant was out) of a grisly bear;
He started a wolf, and he got a snap shot
At a bounding roe, but he touched it not,
Which caused him to mutter a naughty word
In German, which luckily nobody heard,
For he said it right viciously;
And he struck his steed with his armèd heel,
As though horse-flesh were but iron or steel,
Or any thing else that's unable to feel.

What is the sound that meets his ear?
Is it the plaint of some wounded deer?
Is it the wild-fowl's mournful cry,
Or the scream of yon eagle soaring high?
Or is it only the southern breeze
Waving the boughs of the dark pine-trees?—
No—Sir Eppo, be sure 'tis not any of these:

And hark again !
 It comes more plain —
 'Tis a woman's voice in grief or pain.

Like an arrow from the string,
 Like a stone that leaves the sling,
 Like a railroad-train with a Queen inside,
 With directors to poke and directors to guide,
 Like the rush upon deck when a vessel is sinking,
 Like (I vow I'm hard-up for a simile) winking,
 Sir Eppo sprang forward, o'er river and bank all,
 And found—a young lady chained up by the ankle,—
 Yes, chained up in a cool and business-like way,
 As if she'd been only the little dog Tray ;
 While, the more to secure every knight-errant's pity,
 She was really and truly excessively pretty.

Here was a terrible state of things !
 Down from his saddle Sir Eppo springs,
 As lightly as if he were furnished with wings,
 While every plate in his armour rings.
 The words that he uttered were short and few,
 But pretty much to the purpose too,
 As sternly he asked, with lowering brow,
 " Who dared to do it ? " and " Where is he now ? "

'Twere long to tell
 Each word that fell
 From the coral lips of that demoiselle ;
 However, as far as I'm able to see,
 The pith of the matter appeared to be,
 That a horrible giant, twelve feet high,
 Having gazed on her charms with a covetous eye,
 Had stormed their castle, murdered Papa,
 And behaved very rudely to poor dear Mamma,

Taken french leave with the family plate,
 And walked off with herself at a terrible rate ;
 Then, by way of conclusion
 To all this confusion,
 Tied her up, like a dog,
 To a nasty great log,
 To induce her (the brute) to become Mrs. Gog ;—
 That 'twas not the least use for Sir Eppo to try
 To chop off his head, or to poke out his eye,
 As he'd early in life done a bit of Achilles
 (Which much better than taking an "Old Parr's life-
 pill" is),
 Had been dipped in the Styx, or some equally old stream,
 And might now face unharmed a battalion of Coldstream.

 But she'd thought of a scheme,
 Which did certainly seem
 Very likely to pay—no mere vision or dream.
 It appears that the giant each day took a nap
 For an hour (the wretch!) with his head in her lap :
 Oh, she hated it so! but then what could she do?—
 Here she paused, and Sir Eppo remarked, "Very true;"—
 And that during this time one might pinch him or shake
 him,
 Or do just what one pleased, but that nothing could wake
 him,
 While each horse and each man in the emperor's pay
 Would not be sufficient to move him away,
 Without magical aid, from the spot where he lay.
 In an old oak-chest, in an up-stairs room
 Of poor Papa's castle, was kept an heir-loom,
 An enchanted net, made of iron links,
 Which was brought from Palestine, she thinks,

By her great Grandpapa, who had been a crusader ;
If she had but got that, she was sure it would aid her.

Sir Eppo, kind man,
Approves of the plan ;
Says he'll do all she wishes as quick as he can ;
Begs she won't fret if the time should seem long ;
Snatches a kiss, which was " pleasant but wrong ;"
Mounts, and taking a fence in good fox-hunting style,
Sets off for her family seat on the Weil:

The sun went down,
The bright stars burned,
The morning came,
And the knight returned ;
The net he spread
O'er the giant's bed ;
While the eglantine, and hare-bell blue,
And some nice green moss on the spot he threw ;
Lest perchance the monster alarm should take,
And not choose to sleep from being too *wide awake*.

Hark to that sound !
The rocks around
Tremble—it shakes the very ground ;
While Irmengard cries,
As tears stream from her eyes—
A lady-like weakness we must not despise—
(And here, let me add, I have been much to blame,
As I long ago ought to have mentioned her name)—
" Here he comes ! now do hide yourself, dear Eppo, pray ;
For my sake, I entreat you, keep out of his way."

Scarce had the knight
Time to get out of sight

Among some thick bushes, which covered him quite,
Ere the giant appeared—oh, he was such a fright!
He was very square built, a good twelve feet in height,
And his waistcoat (three yards round the waist) seemed
too tight;
While to add even yet to all this singularity,
He had but one eye, and his whiskers were carroty.

What an anxious moment!—will he lie down?
Oh, how their hearts beat!—he seems to frown,—
No, 'tis only an impudent fly that's been teasing
His sublime proboscis, and set him a sneezing.

Attish-hu! attish-hu!

You brute, how I wish you

Were but as genteel as the Irish lady,

Dear Mrs. O'Grady,

Who, chancing to sneeze in a noble duke's face,
Hoped she hadn't been guilty of splashing his Grace.

Now, look out. Yes, he will!—No, he won't!—by the
powers!

I thought he was taking alarm at the flowers;
But it luckily seems, his gigantic invention
Has at once set them down as a little attention
On Irmengard's part, done by way of suggestion
That she means to say "yes" when he next pops the
question.

There! he's down! now he yawns, and in one minute more—
I thought so, he's safe—he's beginning to snore;
He is wrapped in that sleep he shall wake from no more.
From his girdle the knight took a ponderous key—
It fits—and once more is fair Irmengard free:

From heel to head, and from head to heel,
 They wrap their prey in that net of steel,
 And they weave the edges together with care,
 As you finish a purse for a fancy-fair,
 Till the last knot is tied by the diligent pair.
 At length they have ended their business laborious,
 And Eppo shouts, "Bagged him, by all that is glorious!"

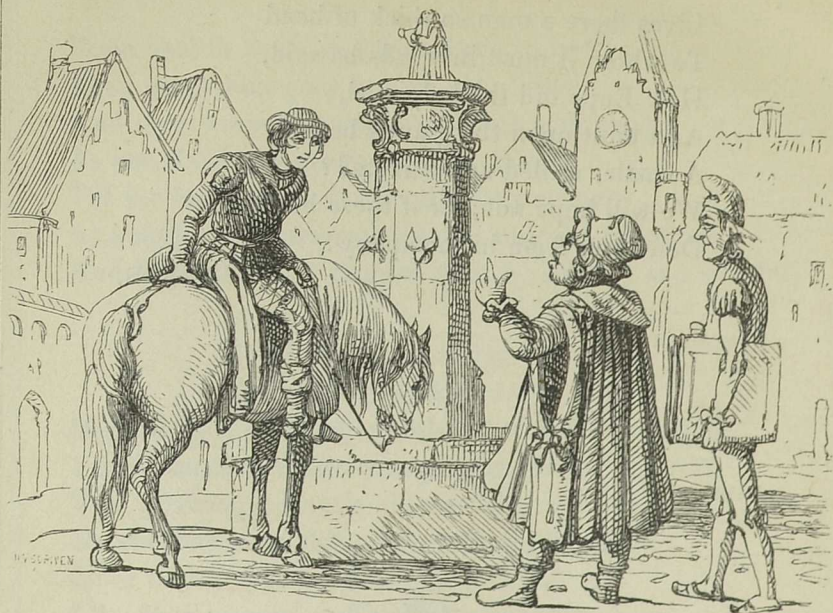
No billing and cooing,
 You must up and be doing,
 Depend on't, Sir Knight, this is no time for wooing;
 You'll discover, unless you progress rather smarter,
 That catching a giant's like catching a Tartar:
 He still has some thirty-five minutes to sleep;
 Close to this spot hangs a precipice steep,
 Like Shakespeare's tall cliff which they shew one at Dover;
 Drag him down to the brink, and then let him roll
 over;
 As they scarce make a capital crime of infanticide,
 There can't be any harm in a little giganticide.

"Pull him, and haul him! take care of his head!
 Oh, how my arms ache—he's heavy as lead!"
 "That'll do, love,—I'm sure I can move him alone,
 Though I'm certain his weight is a good forty stone."
 Yo, heave ho! roll him along,
 (It's exceedingly lucky the net's pretty strong);
 Once more—that's it—there, now, I think,
 He's done to a turn, he rests on the brink;
 At it again, and over he goes
 To furnish a feast for the hooded crows;
 Each vulture that makes the Taunus his home,
 May dine upon giant for months to come.

Lives there a man so thick of head
To whom it must in words be said,
How Eppo did the lady wed,
And built upon the giant's bed
A castle, walled and turreted?
We will hope not; or if there be,
Defend us from his company!

F. E. S.





The Well of Wisdom.

IN Suabia there stood of old a town of honest fame,
A sparkling fountain in the midst had gained a wondrous
name ;
For in its virtues lay a power to make the foolish wise :
The Well of Wisdom it was called, a rare and welcome
prize !
Free access to that stream was had by all within the
town,
No matter what their thirst might be, unchecked they
drank it down :
But strangers, ere they dared to taste, must first permission
gain
Of the mayor and his counsellors, of such an honour
vain.

A horseman once passed through the town, and saw that
fountain play,
And stopped to let his thirsty steed drink of it by the
way.
Meanwhile the rider gazed around on many a structure
fair,
Turret and spire of olden times that pierced the quiet
air.
Such boldness soon attracted round the gaze of passers-
by,—
The mayor ran in robes of state, so quick was rumour's
cry,
That man and horse were at the well, the latter drinking
down
The precious gifts of Wisdom's Well, unsanctioned by the
town.
How swelled the mayor's wrath! how loud his tones, as
thus he spoke,—
“What's this I see? Who's this that hath our civic man-
date broke?
What wickedness mine eyes behold! that wisdom, wasted
so
Upon a brute; as punishment, from this you shall not go,
But stop a prisoner until our council's mind we hear!”
The rider stared; but wiser grown, his steed pricked up
his ear,
And, turning round, he left the town more quickly than
he came,
While watch and ward were gone to guard his exit from
the same;
Forgetting what the horse had drank, they all had gone
in state
To keep their prisoners secure, by guarding the wrong gate.

The Combat of King Tidrich with the Dragon.

HEY for the march of intellect,
 The schoolmaster's abroad,
 And still the cry is raised on high,
 Obey his mighty word;
 Where'er we go, both high and low
 Bow down before his nod;
 And the sceptre may hide its jewelled pride,
 For our sceptre's the birchen rod.

And all "enlightened citizens" and "learned brothers" say,
 That the world was never
 One half so clever
 As it is in the present day.
 Now I deny
 This general cry,
 And will proceed to tell you why:
 I've long since come to the conclusion
 'Tis all a popular delusion.

Oh, I have seen many a wild-beast show,
 From the day when Messrs. Pidcock and Co.
 Were what vulgar people call all-the-go
 To the time when society mourned for the loss
 (All felt it, but no one like poor Mr. Cross)
 Of "Chuney," who went raving mad, as 'tis said,
 With the pressure and pain
 He felt in his brain
 From constantly bearing a trunk on his head.

And I have set eye on
 That magnanimous lion,
 Brave Wallace—oh, fye on
 The brutes who could hie on
 Fierce bull-dogs to fly on
 His monarchical mane! I declare I could cry on
 The bare thought, as one weeps when one goes to see "Ion."

But of all the beasts I ever did see,
 Whether of low or of high degree,
 Despite the "schoolmaster,"
 And "going a-head faster,"
 The arts and the sciences,
 And all their appliances,
 Never an animal, chained or loose,
 As yet have I heard
 Utter one single word,
 Or so much as attempt to say "Bo!" to a goose.

But you'll see, if you read the next two or three pages,
 That in what people now-a-days term the dark ages,
 When the world was some thousand years younger or so,
 Beasts could talk very well; and it wasn't thought low
 For a real live monarch his prowess to brag on,
 And bandy high words with an insolent dragon.

The good King Tidrich rode from Bern
 (And a funny name had he),
 His charger was bay, and he took his way
 Under the greenwood tree;
 And ever he sang, as he rode along,

“ It’s a very fine thing
To be a crowned king,
And to feel one’s right arm strong.”

King Tidrich was clad in armour of proof
(Whatever that may be),
And his helmet shone with many a stone,
Inserted cunningly ;
While on his shield one might behold
A lion trying
To set off flying,
Emblazoned in burnished gold.

King Tidrich was counting his money o’er,
As he rode the greenwood through,
When he was aware of a “ shocking affair,”
And a terrible “ to-do :”
Then loudly he shouted, with pure delight,
“ A glorious row,
I make mine avow ;
I’ll on, and view the fight.”

And a fearful sight it was, I ween,
As ever king did see,
For a dragon old, and a lion bold,
Were striving wrathfully ;
But the monarch perceived from the very first—
And it made him sad,
For “ a reason he had” —
That the lion would get the worst.

When the lion saw the royal knight,
These were the words he said :
“ O mighty king, assistance bring,
Or I am fairly sped ;
For the battle has been both fierce and long ;
Two days and a night
Have I urged the fight,
But the dragon's so very strong.”

In a kind of low Dutch did the lion speak,
Nor his stops did he neglect,
But e'en in his hurry, for Lindley Murray
Preserved a marked respect ;
And he managed his H's according to rule :
Full well I ween
Must the beast have been
Taught at some famous school.

Long paused the royal hero then,
Grave thoughts passed through his brain ;
Of his queen thought he, and his fair country
He never might see again ;
He thought of his warriors, that princely band,
Of Eckhart true,
And Helmschrot too,
And Wolfort's red right hand.

But he thought of the lion he bore on his shield,
And he manned his noble breast,—
“ Twixt the lion and me there is sympathy,
And a dragon I detest ;

I must not see the lion slain ;
Both kings are we,
In our degree,
I of the city and he of the plain."

The first stroke that the monarch made,
His weapon tasted blood ;
From many a scale of the dragon's mail
Poured forth the crimson flood.
But when the hero struck again,
The treacherous sword
Forsook its lord,
And brake in pieces twain.

The dragon laid him on her back
With a triumphant air,
And flung the horse her jaws across,
As a greyhound flings a hare.
At a fearful pace to her rocky den,
To serve as food
For her young brood,
Away she bore him then.

They were a charming family,
Eleven little frights,
With deep surprise in their light-green eyes,
And fearful appetites ;
And they wagged their tails with extreme delight,
For to dine on king
Is a dainty thing
When one usually dines on knight.

Before them then the steed she threw,
 Saddle, and bridle, and crupper,
 And bade them crunch its bones for lunch,
 While they saved the king for supper ;
 Saying she must sleep ere she could sup,
 For after the fight
 With the lion and knight,
 She was thoroughly used up.

A lucky chance for Tidrich :
 He sought the dark cave over,
 And soon the king did Adeling,
 That famous sword, discover :
 " And was it here Siegfried died ?
 That champion brave,
 Was this his grave ?"
 In grief the monarch cried.

" I have ridden with him in princely hosts,
 I have feasted with him in hall ;
 Sword, you and I will do or die,
 But we'll avenge his fall."
 Against the cavern's rocky side
 The king essayed
 The trusty blade,
 Till the flames gleamed far and wide.

Up rose a youthful dragon then,
 Right pallid was his hue ;
 For with fear and ire he viewed the fire
 From out the rock that flew.

These words he to the king did say :
 “ If the noise thou dost make
 Should our mother awake,
It is thou wilt rue the day.”

“ Be silent, thou young viper,”
 ’Twas thus the king replied,
“ Thy mother slew Siegfried true,
 A hero brave and tried ;
And vengeance have I vowed to take
 Upon ye all,
 Both great and small,
For that dear warrior’s sake.”

Then he aroused the dragon old,
 Attacked her with his sword,
And a fearful fight, with strength and might,
 Fought he, that noble lord.
The dragon’s fiery breath, I ween,
 Made his cuirass stout
 Red hot throughout :
Such a sight was never seen.

Despair lent strength to the monarch then ;
 A mighty stroke he made,
Through the dragon’s neck, without a check,
 He passed his trenchant blade.
At their mother’s fall, each little fright
 Began to yell
 Like an imp of hell,
And nearly stunned the knight.

He struck right and left with Adelring,
 That trusty sword and good,
 And in pieces small he cut each and all
 Of the dragon's hateful brood.
 King Tidrich thus at honour's call,
 On German land,
 With his strong right hand,
 Avenged Siegfried's fall.

Now ye whose spirits thrill to hear
 The trumpet-voice of fame,
 Or love to read of warrior deed,
 Remember Tidrich's name;
 And mourn that the days of chivalry
 Are past and o'er,
 And live no more,
 Save in their glorious memory.

F. E. S.

NOTES TO KING TIDRICH'S FIGHT WITH
 THE DRAGON.

"The good King Tidrich rode from Bern." Page 194.

King Tidrich, Dietrich, or Theoderic, the son of Thietmar, king of Bern, and the fair Odilia, daughter of Essung Jarl, was, as it were, the central hero of the "Book of Heroes," which relates the deeds of the champions who attached themselves to him, and the manner in which they joined his fellowship.

"Of his queen thought he, and his fair country." Page 196.

Tidrich of Bern was also king of Aumlungaland (Italy); he espoused Herraud, daughter of King Drusiad, a relation of Attila.

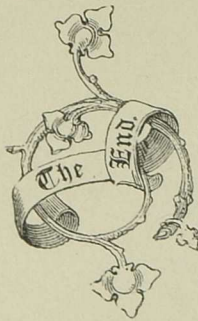
*“Of Eckhart true,
And Helmschrot too,
And Wolfort’s red right hand.”* Page 196.

These three champions were among the eleven heroes who accompanied Tidrich in his expedition to contend against the twelve guardians of the Garden of Roses at Worms.

“And was it here Siegfried died?” Page 198.

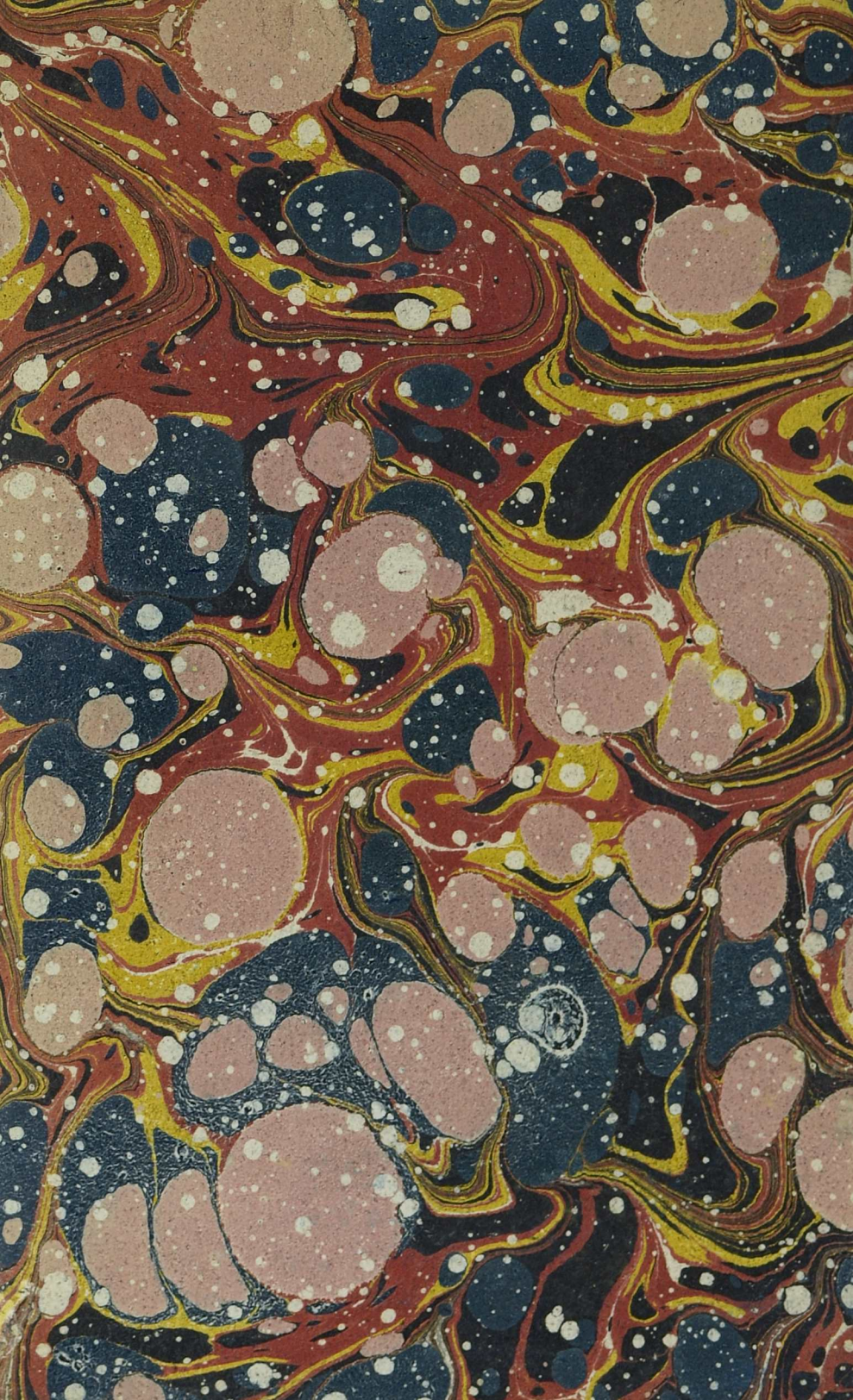
Sigurd, or Siegfried, son of Sigmond, king of Netherland, is the chief hero of the Nibelungen Lay. There are various accounts of his death, one of which supposes him to have been destroyed by a dragon.

Should any reader wish to learn more of the various personages here mentioned, we refer him to the “Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, from the earlier Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances,” to which we are indebted for our information on the subject.

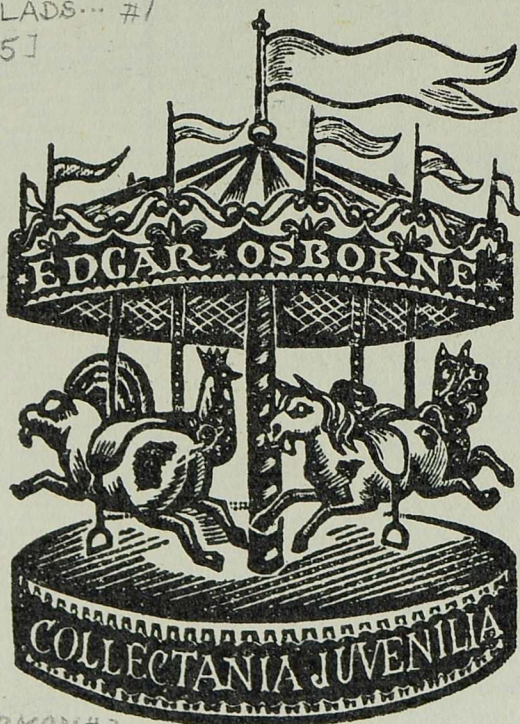


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III

