

Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Volume 1 (of 3) Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs and Other Pieces of Our Earlier Poets Together With Some Few of Later Date

[Pg i]



PERCY'S RELIQUES.



[Pg ii]

[Pg iii]

BY
THOMAS PERCY, D.D.
BISHOP OF DROMORE

EDITED, WITH A GENERAL INTRODUCTION, ADDITIONAL PREFACES, NOTES, GLOSSARY, ETC.

BY
HENRY B. WHEATLEY, F.S.A.

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOL. I

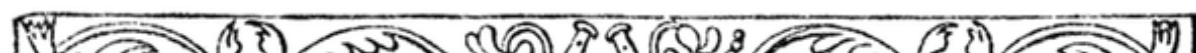
LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1

[Pg iv]

First Published by Swan Sonnenschein	<i>April</i>	<i>1885</i>
Reprinted	<i>August</i>	<i>1891</i>
"	<i>August</i>	<i>1899</i>
"	<i>December</i>	<i>1909</i>
"	<i>January</i>	<i>1927</i>


Printed by the Riverside Press Limited, Edinburgh
Great Britain

[Pg v]





CONTENTS OF VOLUME THE FIRST

PAGE	
 Editor's Preface	ix
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	
The Minstrels	xiii
Ballads and Ballad Writers	xxiv
Imitators and Forgers	xliv
Authenticity of Certain Ballads	xlviii
Preservers of the Ballads	lviii
Life of Percy	lxxi
Folio MS. and the <i>Reliques</i>	lxxxi
Ballad Literature since Percy	xci
Dedications	1
Advertisement to the fourth edition	4
Preface	7
BOOK THE FIRST	
1. The ancient Ballad of Chevy-chase	19
2. The Battle of Otterbourne	35
Illustration of the Names in the foregoing ballads	51
3. The Jew's Daughter. A Scottish Ballad	54
4. Sir Cauline	61
Copy from the Folio MS.	76
5. Edward, Edward. A Scottish Ballad	82
6. King Estmere	85
On the word Termagant	96
7. Sir Patrick Spence. A Scottish Ballad	98
8. Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne	102

9.	An Elegy on Henry Fourth, Earl of Northumberland, by Skelton	117
10.	The Tower of Doctrine, by Stephen Hawes[Pg vi]	127
11.	The Child of Elle	131
	Fragment from the Folio MS.	138
12.	Edom o' Gordon. A Scottish Ballad	140
	Captain Carre, from the Folio MS	148
BOOK THE SECOND.		
<i>(Containing Ballads that illustrate Shakespeare.)</i>		
1.	Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley	153
2.	The aged Lover renounceth Love, by Lord Vaux	179
3.	Jephthah judge of Israel	182
4.	A Robyn Jolly Robyn	185
5.	A Song to the lute in musicke, by R. Edwards	187
6.	King Cophetua and the Beggar-maid	189
7.	Take thy old cloak about thee	195
8.	Willow, Willow, Willow	199
9.	Sir Lancelot du Lake	204
10.	Corydon's Farewell to Phillis	209
	The Ballad of constant Susanna	209
11.	Gernutus the Jew of Venice	211
12.	The passionate Shepherd to his Love, by Marlowe	220
	The Nymph's Reply, by Sir W. Raleigh	223
13.	Titus Andronicus's Complaint	224
14.	Take those lips away	230
15.	King Leir and his three daughters	231
16.	Youth and Age, by Shakespeare	237
17.	The Frolicksome Duke, or the Tinker's good Fortune	238
18.	The Friar of Orders Gray, by Percy	242
BOOK THE THIRD.		
1.	The more modern Ballad of Chevy-chace	249
	Illustration of the Northern Names	263
2.	Death's final Conquest, by James Shirley	264
3.	The Rising in the North	266
	Copy from the Folio MS	274
4.	Northumberland betrayed by Douglas	279

	Copy from the Folio MS	289
5.	My Mind to me a Kingdom is, by Sir Edward Dyer	294
6.	The Patient Countess, by W. Warner	298
7.	Dowsabell, by M. Drayton[Pg vii]	304
8.	The Farewell to Love, from Beaumont and Fletcher	310
9.	Ulysses and the Syren, by S. Daniel	311
10.	Cupid's Pastime, by Davison	314
11.	The character of a happy life, by Sir H. Wotton.	317
12.	Gilderoy. A Scottish Ballad	318
13.	Winifreda	323
14.	The Witch of Wokey	325
15.	Bryan and Pereene. A West Indian Ballad, by Dr. Grainger	328
16.	Gentle River, Gentle River. Translated from the Spanish	331
17.	Alcanzor and Zayda, a Moorish Tale	338
APPENDIX I.		
	An Essay on the Ancient Minstrels in England	343
	Notes and Illustrations	382
APPENDIX II.		
	On the Origin of the English Stage, &c.	431
	Index to Vol. I	459

ERRATA.

Page [27](#), Note [\[142\]](#), after *Fit* read "see vol. 2, p. 182."

Page [76](#), add ✱ at end of *Sir Cauline*.

[Pg viii]

[Pg ix]



EDITOR'S PREFACE



In undertaking the supervision of a new edition of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, I felt that no safer or better guidance could be followed than that of Bishop Percy himself; and as he always strove, in the several editions published by himself, to embody therein the sum of the knowledge of his times, so I, following at a distance, have endeavoured, by gathering from many quarters particulars published since his death, to make his book still more worthy of the great reputation it has acquired.

Each edition published during the lifetime of the author contained large additions and corrections; but since the publication of the fourth edition, in 1794, no changes worth mentioning have been made, with the exception of such as occur in a revision brought out by the Rev. R. A. Willmott in 1857. His object, however, was to form a handy volume, and he therefore[Pg x] cleared away all Percy's Essays and Prefaces, and added short notices of his own, founded on Percy's facts, and, in some instances, on recent information.

The desire for a new edition of the *Reliques* has more particularly grown since the publication of the original folio MS. in 1867, and I trust that the readers of the present edition may feel disposed to accept it as in some degree satisfying this desire.

In the preparation of the present edition, the whole of Percy's work has been reprinted from his fourth edition, which contains his last touches; and in order that no confusion should be occasioned to the reader, all my notes and additions have been placed between brackets. The chief of these are the additional prefaces to the various pieces, the glossarial notes at the foot of the page, and the collation of such pieces as are taken from the folio MS. The complete glossary, which will be appended to the third volume, might seem to render the glossarial notes unnecessary; but there may be some readers who will find them useful. With regard to the pieces taken from the folio MS., the originals have been printed after Percy's copies in those cases which had undergone considerable alterations. Readers have now, therefore, before them complete materials for forming an opinion as to the use the Bishop made of his manuscript.

After commencing my work, I found that to treat[Pg xi] the Essays interspersed throughout the book as the Prefaces had been treated, would necessitate so many notes and corrections as to cause confusion; and as the Essays on the English Stage, and the Metrical Romances, are necessarily out of date, the trouble expended would not have been repaid by the utility of the result. I have, therefore, thrown them to the end of their respective volumes, where they can be read exactly as Percy left them.

In concluding these explanations, I have much pleasure in expressing my thanks to those friends who have assisted me, and to those writers without whose previous labours mine could not have been performed, more particularly to Messrs. Furnivall and Hales, who most kindly gave me permission to use any part of their edition of the folio MS. To Mr. Hales I am also indebted for many valuable hints, of which I have gladly availed myself.

Henry B. Wheatley.

[Pg xii]

[Pg xiii]





GENERAL INTRODUCTION



Several questions of general interest have arisen for discussion by the editor during the work of revision. Notes upon these have been brought together, so as to form an introduction, which it is hoped may be of some use to the readers of the *Reliques*, in the absence of an exhaustive compilation, which has yet to be made. Here there is no attempt at completeness of treatment, and the notes are roughly arranged under the following headings:—

The Minstrels.

Ballads and Ballad Writers.

Imitators and Forgers.

Authenticity of certain Ballads.

Preservers of the Ballads.

Life of Percy.

Folio MS. and the *Reliques*.

Ballad Literature since Percy.

The Minstrels.

When Percy wrote the opening sentence in his first sketch of that "Essay on the Ancient English[Pg xiv] Minstrels" (1765), which was the foundation of the literature of the subject, he little expected the severe handling he was to receive from the furious Ritson for his hasty utterance. His words were, "The minstrels seem to have been the genuine successors of the ancient bards, who united the arts of poetry and music, and sung verses to the harp of their own composing." The bishop was afterwards convinced, from Ritson's remarks, that the rule he had enunciated was too rigid, and in the later form of the Essay he somewhat modified his language. The last portion of the sentence then stood, "composed by themselves or others," and a note was added to the effect that he was "wedded to no hypothesis."

Sir Walter Scott criticised the controversy in his interesting article on *Romance* in the supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where he wrote: "When so popular a department of poetry has attained this decided character, it becomes time to inquire who were the composers of these numerous, lengthened, and once-admired narratives which are called metrical romances, and from whence they drew their authority. Both these subjects of discussion have been the source of great

controversy among antiquarians; a class of men who, be it said with their forgiveness, are apt to be both positive and polemical upon the very points which are least susceptible of proof, and which are least valuable if the truth could be ascertained; and which, therefore, we would gladly have seen handled with more diffidence and better temper in proportion to their uncertainty." After some remarks upon the essays of Percy and Ritson, he added, "Yet there is so little room for this extreme loss of temper, that upon a recent perusal of both these ingenious essays, we were surprised to find that the reverend editor of the[Pg xv] *Reliques* and the accurate antiquary have differed so very little as in essential facts they appear to have done. Quotations are indeed made by both with no sparing hand; and hot arguments, and on one side, at least, hard words are unsparingly employed; while, as is said to happen in theological polemics, the contest grows warmer in proportion as the ground concerning which it is carried on is narrower and more insignificant. In reality their systems do not essentially differ." Ritson's great object was to set forth more clearly than Percy had done that the term *minstrel* was a comprehensive one, including the poet, the singer, and the musician, not to mention the *fablier*, *conteur*, *jugleur*, *baladin*, &c.

Ritson delighted in collecting instances of the degradation into which the minstrel gradually sank, and, with little of Percy's taste, he actually preferred the ballad-writer's songs to those of the minstrel. Percy, on the other hand, gathered together all the material he could to set the minstrel in a good light. There is abundant evidence that the latter was right in his view of the minstrel's position in feudal times, but there were grades in this profession as in others, and law-givers doubtless found it necessary to control such Bohemians as wandered about the country without licence. The minstrel of a noble house was distinguished by bearing the badge of his lord attached to a silver chain, and just as in later times the players who did not bear the name of some courtier were the subjects of parliamentary enactments, so the unattached minstrels were treated as vagrants. Besides the minstrels of great lords, there were others attached to important cities. On May 26, 1298, as appears by the Wardrobe accounts of Edward I., that king gave 6s. 8*d.* to Walter Lovel, the harper of Chichester, whom he found playing the[Pg xvi] harp before the tomb of St. Richard in the Cathedral of Chichester.

Waits were formerly attached to most corporate towns, and were, in fact, the corporation minstrels. They wore a livery and a badge, and were formed into a sort of guild. No one, even were he an inhabitant of the town, was suffered to play in public who was not free of the guild. Besides singing out the hours of the night, and warning the town against dangers, they accompanied themselves with the harp, the pipe, the hautboy, and other instruments. They played in the town for the gratification of the inhabitants, and attended the mayor on all state occasions. At the mayor's feast they occupied the minstrels' gallery. From the merchants' guild book at Leicester, it appears that as early as 1314 "Hugh the Trumpeter" was made free of the guild, and in 1481 "Henry Howman, a harper," was also made free, while in 1499 "Thomas Wylkyns, Wayte," and in 1612 "Thomas Pollard, musician," were likewise admitted.^[1]

Percy collected so many facts concerning the old minstrels, that it is not necessary to add much to his stock of information, especially as, though a very interesting subject in itself, it has really very little to do with the contents of the *Reliques*.

The knightly Troubadours and Trouvères, and such men as Taillefer, the Norman minstrel, who at the battle of Hastings advanced on horseback before the invading host, and gave the signal for attack by singing the Song of Roland, who died at Roncesvalles, had little in common with the authors of the ballads in this book.

[Pg xvii]

The wise son of Sirach enumerates among those famous men who are worthy to be praised "such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing;" but, according to Hector Boece, the early Scottish kings thought otherwise. In the Laws of Kenneth II., "bardis" are mentioned with vagabonds, fools, and idle persons, to be scourged and burnt on the cheek, unless they found some work by which to live; and the same laws against them were, according to Boece, still in

force in the reign of Macbeth, nearly two centuries later. Better times, however, came, and Scotch bards and minstrels were highly favoured in the reign of James III.; but the sunshine did not last long. In 1574, "pipers, fiddlers, and minstrels" are again branded with the opprobrious term of vagabonds, and threatened with severe penalties; and the Regent Morton induced the Privy Council to issue an edict that "nane tak upon hand to emprent or sell whatsoever book, ballet, or other werk," without its being examined and licensed, under pain of death and confiscation of goods. In August, 1579, two poets of Edinburgh (William Turnbull, schoolmaster, and William Scot, notar, "baith weel belovit of the common people for their common offices"), were hanged for writing a satirical ballad against the Earl of Morton; and in October of the same year, the Estates passed an Act against beggars and "sic as make themselves fules and are bards ... minstrels, sangsters, and tale tellers, not avowed in special service by some of the lords of parliament or great burghs."

The minstrels had their several rounds, and, as a general rule, did not interfere with each other; but it is probable that they occasionally made a foray into other districts, in order to replenish their worn-out stock of songs.

One of the last of the true minstrels was Richard[Pg xviii] Sheale, who enjoys the credit of having preserved the old version of *Chevy Chase*. He was for a time in the service of Edward, Earl of Derby, and wrote an elegy on the Countess, who died in January, 1558. He afterwards followed the profession of a minstrel at Tamworth, and his wife was a "sylke woman," who sold shirts, head clothes, and laces, &c., at the fairs of Lichfield and other neighbouring towns. On one occasion, when he left Tamworth on horseback, with his harp in his hand, he had the misfortune to be robbed by four highwaymen, who lay in wait for him near Dunsmore Heath. He wrote a long account of his misfortune in verse,[\[2\]](#) in which he describes the grief of himself and his wife at their great loss, and laments over the coldness of worldly friends. He was robbed of threescore pounds—a large amount in those days—not obtained, however, from the exercise of his own skill, but by the sale of his wife's wares. This money was to be devoted to the payment of their debts, and in order that the carriage of it should not be a burden to him he changed it all for gold. He thought he might carry it safely, as no one would suspect a minstrel of possessing so much property, but he found to his cost that he had been foolishly bold. To add to his affliction, some of his acquaintances grieved him by saying that he was a lying knave, and had not been robbed, as it was not possible for a minstrel to have so much money. There was a little sweetness, however, in the poor minstrel's cup, for patrons were kind, and his loving neighbours at Tamworth exerted themselves to help him. They induced him to brew a bushel of malt, and sell the ale.

All this is related in a poem, which gives a vivid [Pg xix]picture of the life of the time, although the verse does not do much credit to the poet's skill.

When the minstrel class had fallen to utter decay in England, it flourished with vigour in Wales; and we learn that the harpers and fiddlers were prominent figures in the Cymmortha, or gatherings of the people for mutual aid. These assemblies were of a similar character to the "Bees," which are common among our brethren in the United States. They were often abused for political purposes, and they gave some trouble to Burghley as they had previously done to Henry IV. In the reign of that king a statute was passed forbidding rhymers, minstrels, &c. from making the Cymmortha. The following extract from a MS. in the Lansdowne Collection in the British Museum, on the state of Wales in Elizabeth's reign, shows the estimation in which the minstrels were then held:—

"Upon the Sundays and holidays the multitudes of all sorts of men, women, and children of every parish do use to meet in sundry places, either on some hill or on the side of some mountain, where their harpers and crowthers sing them songs of the doings of their ancestors."[\[3\]](#)

Ben Jonson introduces "Old Father Rosin," the chief minstrel of Highgate, as one of the principal characters in his *Tale of a Tub*; and the blind harpers continued for many years to keep up the remembrance of the fallen glories of the minstrel's profession. Tom D'Urfey relates how merrily *blind Tom* harped, and mention is made of "honest Jack Nichols, the harper,"

in Tom Brown's *Letters from the Dead to the Living* (Works, ii. 191). Sir Walter Scott, in the article on *Romance* referred to above, [Pg xx]tells us that "about fifty or sixty years since" (which would be about the year 1770) "a person acquired the nickname of 'Roswal and Lillian,' from singing that romance about the streets of Edinburgh, which is probably the very last instance of the proper minstrel craft." Scott himself, however, gives later instances in the introduction to the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. He there writes: "It is certain that till a very late period the pipers, of whom there was one attached to each border town of note, and whose office was often hereditary, were the great depositaries of oral, and particularly of poetical tradition. About spring-time, and after harvest, it was the custom of these musicians to make a progress through a particular district of the country. The music and the tale repaid their lodging, and they were usually gratified, with a donation of seed corn. This order of minstrels is alluded to in the comic song of *Maggy Lauder*, who thus addresses a piper:

'Live ye upo' the border?'"[4]

To this is added the following note:—"These town pipers, an institution of great antiquity upon the borders, were certainly the last remains of the minstrel race. Robin Hastie, town piper of Jedburgh, perhaps the last of the order, died nine or ten years ago; his family was supposed to have held the office for about three centuries. Old age had rendered Robin a wretched performer, but he knew several old songs and tunes, which have probably died along with him. The town-pipers received a livery and salary from the community to which they belonged; and in some burghs they had a small allotment of land, called the Pipers' Croft." Scott further adds:—"Other itinerants, not professed musicians, [Pg xxi]found their welcome to their night's quarters readily ensured by their knowledge in legendary lore. John Græme, of Sowport, in Cumberland, commonly called the Long Quaker, a person of this latter description, was very lately alive, and several of the songs now published have been taken down from his recitation." A note contains some further particulars of this worthy:—"This person, perhaps the last of our professed ballad reciters, died since the publication of the first edition of this work. He was by profession an itinerant cleaner of clocks and watches, but a stentorian voice and tenacious memory qualified him eminently for remembering accurately and reciting with energy the border gathering songs and tales of war. His memory was latterly much impaired, yet the number of verses which he could pour forth, and the animation of his tone and gestures, formed a most extraordinary contrast to his extreme feebleness of person and dotage of mind." Ritson, in mentioning some relics of the minstrel class, writes:—"It is not long since that the public papers announced the death of a person of this description somewhere in Derbyshire; and another from the county of Gloucester was within these few years to be seen in the streets of London; he played on an instrument of the rudest construction, which he properly enough called a *humstrum*, and chanted (amongst others) the old ballad of *Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor*, which, by the way, has every appearance of being originally a minstrel song." He adds further in a note:—"He appeared again in January, 1790, and called upon the present writer in the April following. He was between sixty and seventy years of age, but had not been brought up to the profession of a minstrel, nor possessed any great store of songs, of which that mentioned in the text seemed the principal. Having,[Pg xxii] it would seem, survived his minstrel talents, and forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art, he has been of late frequently observed begging in the streets."[5]

These quotations relate to the end of the last or to the very early part of the present century, but we can add a notice of minstrels who lived well on towards the middle of this century. Mr. J. H. Dixon, in the preface to his *Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads*, printed for the Percy Society in 1845, writes as follows:—"Although the harp has long been silent in the dales of the north of England and Scotland, it has been succeeded by the violin, and a class of men are still in existence and pursuing their calling, who are the regular descendants and representatives of the minstrels of old. In his rambles amongst the hills of the North, and especially in the wild and romantic dales of Yorkshire, the editor has met with several of these characters. They are not idle vagabonds who have no other calling, but in general are honest and industrious, though poor men, having a local habitation as well as a name, and engaged in some calling, pastoral or

manual. It is only at certain periods, such as Christmas, or some other of the great festal seasons of the ancient church, that they take up the minstrel life, and levy contributions in the hall of the peer or squire, and in the cottage of the farmer or peasant. They are in general well-behaved, and often very witty fellows, and therefore their visits are always welcome. These minstrels do not sing modern songs, but, like their brethren of a bygone age, they keep to the ballads. The editor has in his possession some old poems, which he obtained from one of these minstrels, who is still living and fiddling in Yorkshire."

[Pg xxiii]

In his *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, 1846, Mr. Dixon notices one of these relics of the past, viz. Francis King, who was well known in the western dales of Yorkshire as "the Skipton Minstrel:"—"This poor minstrel, from whose recitation two of our ballads were obtained, met his death by drowning in December, 1844. He had been at a merry meeting at Gargrave in Craven, and it is supposed that owing to the darkness of the night he had mistaken his homeward road, and walked into the water. He was one in whose character were combined the mimic and the minstrel, and his old jokes and older ballads and songs ever insured him a hearty welcome. His appearance was peculiar, and owing to one leg being shorter than its companion, he walked in such a manner as once drew from a wag the remark, 'that few *kings* had had more ups and downs in the world!' As a musician his talents were creditable, and some of the dance tunes that he was in the habit of composing showed that he was not deficient in the organ of melody. In the quiet churchyard of Gargrave may be seen the minstrel's grave."

Percy wrote an interesting note upon the division of some of the long ballads into fits (see vol. ii. p. 182). The minstrel's payment for each of these fits was a groat; and so common was this remuneration, that a groat came to be generally spoken of as "fiddler's money."

Puttenham describes the blind harpers and tavern minstrels as giving a fit of mirth for a groat; and in Ben Jonson's *masque of the Metamorphosed Gipsies*, 1621, Townshead, the clown, cries out, "I cannot hold now; there's my groat, let's have a fit for mirth sake."

The payment seems to have remained the same,[Pg xxiv] though the money became in time reduced in value, so that, as the minstrel fell in repute, his reward became less. In 1533, however, a Scotch eighteen-penny groat possessed a considerable buying power, as appears from the following extract:—

"Sir Walter Coupar, chaplaine in Edinburghe, gate a pynte of vyne, a laiffe of 36 vnce vaight, a peck of aite meill, a pynte of aill, a scheipe head, ane penny candell and a faire woman for ane xviii. penny grotte."[\[6\]](#)

After the Restoration, the sixpence took the place of the groat; and it is even now a current phrase to say, when several sixpences are given in change, "What a lot of fiddlers' money!"

Ballads and Ballad Writers.

One of the most important duties of the old minstrel was the chanting of the long romances of chivalry, and the question whether the ballads were detached portions of the romances, or the romances built up from ballads, has greatly agitated the minds of antiquaries. There seems reason to believe that in a large number of instances the most telling portions of the romance were turned into ballads, and this is certainly the case in regard to several of those belonging to the Arthurian cycle. On the other side, such poems as Barbour's *Bruce* and Blind Harry's *Wallace* have, according to Motherwell, swept out of existence the memory of the ballads from which they were formed. When Barbour wrote, ballads relative to Bruce and his times were common, "for the poet, [Pg xxv]in speaking of certain 'thre worthi poyntis of wer,' omits the particulars of the 'thrid which fell into Esdail,' being a victory gained by 'Schyr Johne the Soullis,' over 'Schyr Andrew Hardclay,' for

this reason:—

'I will nocht rehers the maner,
For wha sa likes thai may her,
Young wemen quhen thai will play,
Syng it amang thaim ilk day.'"[\[7\]](#)

Another instance of the agglutinative process may be cited in the gradual growth of the Robin Hood ballads into a sort of epic, the first draught of which we may see in the *Merrye Geste*. The directness and dramatic cast of the minstrel ballad, however, form a strong argument in favour of the theory that they were largely taken from the older romances and chronicles, and the fragmentary appearance of some of them gives force to this view. Without preface, they go at once straight to the incident to be described. Frequently the ballad opens with a conversation, and some explanation of the position of the interlocutors was probably given by the minstrel as a prose introduction. Motherwell, in illustration of the opinion that the abrupt transitions of the ballads were filled up by the explanations of the minstrels, gives the following modern instance:—

"Traces of such a custom still remain in the lowlands of Scotland among those who have stores of these songs upon their memory. Reciters frequently, when any part of the narrative appears incomplete, supply the defect in prose.... I have heard the ancient ballad of *Young Beichan and Susan Pye* dilated by a story-teller into a tale of very remarkable dimensions—a paragraph of prose, and then a [Pg xxvi]*screed* of rhyme, alternately given. From this ballad I may give a short specimen, after the fashion of the venerable authority from whom I quote: 'Well ye must know that in the Moor's castle there was a massymore, which is a dark, deep dungeon for keeping prisoners. It was twenty feet below the ground, and into this hole they closed poor Beichan. There he stood, night and day, up to his waist in puddle water; but night or day, it was all one to him, for no ae styme of light ever got in. So he lay there a long and weary while, and thinking on his heavy weird, he made a mournfu' sang to pass the time, and this was the sang that he made, and grat when he sang it, for he never thought of ever escaping from the massymore, or of seeing his ain country again:

'My hounds they all ran masterless,
My hawks they flee from tree to tree;
My youngest brother will heir my lands,
And fair England again I'll never see.

Oh were I free as I hae been,
And my ship swimming once more on sea;
I'd turn my face to fair England,
And sail no more to a strange countrie.'

'Now the cruel Moor had a beautiful daughter, called Susan Pye, who was accustomed to take a walk every morning in her garden, and as she was walking ae day she heard the sough o' Beichan's sang, coming, as it were, from below the ground,'"
&c.[\[8\]](#)

The contrast between the construction of minstrel ballads and those of the ballad-mongers who arose as a class in the reign of Elizabeth is very marked. The ballad-singers who succeeded the minstrels were sufficiently wise not to reject the treasures of their predecessors, and many of the old songs were rewritten [Pg xxvii]and lengthened to suit their purpose. *Sir Patrick Spence* would perhaps be the best of the minstrel ballads to oppose to one of the best of the later ballads, such as the *Beggar's Daughter of Bednall Green*; but as its authenticity has been disputed, it will be well to choose another, and *Captaine Carre*, which Ritson allows to have been one of the few minstrel ballads he acknowledges, will do well for the

purpose. As both these poems are before our readers, it will only be necessary to quote the first stanzas of each. The version in the folio MS. of *Captain Carre* commences abruptly thus:—

"ffaith maister, whither you will,
whereas you like the best,
unto the castle of Bitton's borrow,
and there to take your rest."[\[9\]](#)

This is a remarkable contrast to the opening of the *Beggar's Daughter*:—

"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."[\[10\]](#)

Some may think, however, that this ballad is an adaptation by the ballad-monger from an older original, so that perhaps a still better instance of the great change in form that the ballads underwent will be found in the *Children in the Wood*.[\[11\]](#)

This favourite ballad is one of the best specimens of that didactic style which is so natural in the hands of the master, but degenerates into such tedious twaddle when copied by the pupil. The first stanza is:—

"Now ponder well, you parents deare,
These wordes, which I shall write;
A doleful story you shall heare,
[Pg xxviii] In time brought forth to light.
A gentleman of good account
In Norfolke dwelt of late,
Who did in honour far surmount
Most men of his estate."

To put the matter simply, we may say that the writer of the old minstrel ballad expected an unhesitating belief for all his statements. "If fifteen stalwart foresters are slain by one stout knight, single-handed, he never steps out of his way to prove the truth of such an achievement by appealing to the exploits of some other notable manslayer."[\[12\]](#) On the other hand the professional ballad-writer gives a reason for everything he states, and in consequence fills his work with redundancies.

Percy understood the characteristics of the older ballads, and explained the difference between the two classes of ballads in his *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels*,[\[13\]](#) but unfortunately he did not bear the distinction in mind when he altered some of the ballads in the folio MS. So that we find it to have been his invariable practice to graft the prettinesses and redundancies of the later writers upon the simplicity of the earlier. For instance, in his version of *Sir Cauline* he inserts such well-worn saws as the following:—

"Everye white will have its blacke,
And everye sweete its sowre:
This founde the ladye Cristabelle
In an untimely howre."[\[14\]](#)

Ritson also remarks upon the distinctive styles of the ancient and modern writers, but, as observed above, he had the bad taste to prefer the work of [Pg xxix]the later ballad-writer. His opinion is given in the following passage:—"These songs [of the minstrels] from their wild and licentious metre were incapable of any certain melody or air; they were chanted in a monotonous stile to the harp or other instrument, and both themselves and the performers banished by the introduction of

ballad-singers without instruments, who sung printed pieces to fine and simple melodies, possibly of their own invention, most of which are known and admired at this day. The latter, owing to the smoothness of their language, and accuracy of their measure and rime, were thought to be more poetical than the old harp or instrument songs; and though critics may judge otherwise, the people at large were to decide, and did decide: and in some respects, at least, not without justice, as will be evident from a comparison of the following specimens.

"The first is from the old *Chevy Chase*, a very popular minstrel ballad in the time of Queen Elizabeth:—

'The Persé owt of Northombarlande,
And a vowe to God mayd he,' &c.[\[15\]](#)

How was it possible that this barbarous language, miserably chanted 'by some blind crowder with no rougher voice than rude stile,' should maintain its ground against such lines as the following, sung to a beautiful melody, which we know belongs to them?—

'When as king Henry rul'd the land,
The second of that name,
Besides the queen he dearly lov'd,
A fair and comely dame,' &c.[\[16\]](#)

The minstrels would seem to have gained little by such a contest. In short, they gave up the old *Chevy* [Pg xxx]*Chase* to the ballad-singers, who, desirous, no doubt, to avail themselves of so popular a subject, had it new written, and sung it to the favourite melody just mentioned. The original, of course, became utterly neglected, and but for its accidental discovery by Hearne, would never have been known to exist."[\[17\]](#)

Percy held the view, which was afterwards advocated by Scott, that the Borders were the true home of the romantic ballad, and that the chief minstrels originally belonged either to the north of England or the south of Scotland;[\[18\]](#) but later writers have found the relics of a ballad literature in the north of Scotland. The characteristics of the ballad doubtless varied to some extent in different parts of the country, but there is no reason to believe that the glory of being its home can be confined to any one place. Unfortunately this popular literature was earlier lost in the plains than among the hills, while the recollection of the fatal fields of Otterburn, Humbledon, Flodden, Halidon, Hedgeley, Hexham, &c., would naturally keep it alive longer among the families of the Border than elsewhere.

Before proceeding further, it may be as well to say a few words upon the word *ballad*. The strong line of demarcation that is now drawn between an ordinary song and a ballad is a late distinction, and even Dr. Johnson's only explanation of the word "ballad" in his *Dictionary* is "a song." One of his quotations is taken from Watts, to the effect that "ballad once signified a solemn and sacred song, as well as trivial, when Solomon's Song was called the ballad of ballads; but now it is applied to nothing but trifling verse." The "balade" as used by Chaucer and others was a song written in a particular rhythm, but later writers [Pg xxxi]usually meant by a ballad a song that was on the lips of the people.

It is not necessary to enlarge here upon the change of meaning that the word has undergone, nor to do more than mention the relation that it bears to the word ballet. As a *ballad* is now a story told in verse, so a *ballet* is now a story told in a dance. Originally the two were one, and the ballad was a song sung while the singers were dancing.

When Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun wrote, "I knew a very wise man, so much of Sir Christopher's sentiment that he believed if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation," he referred to the popular songs of the people, but, in point of fact, a nation makes its own ballads, which do not become current coin until stamped with public approval. No song will change a people's purpose, but the national heart will be

found written in a country's songs as a reflection of what has happened.

The successful ballad-writer requires a quick eye and ear to discern what is smouldering in the public mind, and then if his words fall in with the humour of the people his productions will have a powerful influence, and may set the country in a blaze. *Ça ira* and the *Carmagnole* had much influence on the progress of the great French Revolution, as *Mourir pour la Patrie* had upon that of 1848. *Lilliburlero* gave the finishing stroke to the English Revolution of 1688, and its author (Lord Wharton) boasted that he had rhymed King James out of his dominions.

The old ballad filled the place of the modern newspaper, and history can be read in ballads by those who try to understand them; but the type is often blurred, and in attempting to make out their meaning, we must be careful not to see too much, [Pg xxxii] for the mere fact of the existence of a ballad does not prove its popularity or its truth.

Literature is often presumed to assert a larger influence over a nation than it really does, and there is little doubt that literature is more a creation of the people than the people are a creation of literature. Where a healthy public opinion exists, people are less affected to action by what is written than is sometimes supposed, but still there is an important reflex action, and—

"Words are things, and a small drop of ink
Falling like dew upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

There are recorded instances of the powerful influence of ballads, and we know how much Dibdin's sea songs did for the British navy, when they placed before the sailor an ideal of his own feelings, and painted men he wished to be like.

The songs of a country are the truly natural part of its poetry, and really the only poetry of the great body of the people. Percy, in the dedication to his *Reliques*, calls ballads the "barbarous productions of unpolished ages." Nevertheless they are instinct with life, and live still, while much of the polished poetry of his age, which expelled nature from literature, is completely dead. Nature is the salt that keeps the ballad alive, and many have maintained a continuance of popularity for several centuries.

A good ballad is not an easy thing to write, and many poets who have tried their hand at composition in this branch of their art have signally failed, as may be seen by referring to some of the modern pieces in this book, which Percy hoped would "atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems."

The true ballad is essentially dramatic, and one that is to make itself felt should be all action, without[Pg xxxiii] any moralizing padding, for it is a narrative in verse meant for the common people. James Hogg, himself a successful ballad-writer, has something to say about a good song: "A man may be sair mista'en about many things, sic as yepics, an' tragedies, an' tales, an' even lang set elegies about the death o' great public characters, an' hymns, an' odes, an' the like, but he canna be mista'en about a sang. As sune as it's down on the sclate I ken whether it's gude, bad, or middlin'. If any of the two last I dight it out wi' my elbow; if the first, I copy it o'er into writ and then get it aff by heart, when it's as sure o' no' being lost as if it war engraven on a brass plate. For though I hae a treacherous memory about things in ordinar', a' my happy sangs will cleave to my heart to my dying day, an' I should na wonder gin I war to croon a verse or twa frae some o' them on my deathbed."

All ballads are songs, but all songs are not ballads, and the difference between a ballad and a song is something the same as that between a proverb and an apophthegm, for the ballad like the proverb should be upon many lips. A poet may write a poem and call it a ballad: but it requires the public approval before it becomes one in fact.

The objects of the minstrel and the ballad-singer were essentially different: thus the minstrel's stock of ballads usually

lasted him his lifetime, and as his living depended upon them they were jealously guarded by him from others. Nothing he objected to more than to see them in print. The chief aim of the ballad-singer, on the other hand, was to sell his collection of printed broadsides, and to obtain continually a new stock, so as to excite the renewed attention of his customers.

Henry Chettle mentions in his *Kind Hart's Dream*, 1592, the sons of one Barnes, who boasted that they[Pg xxxiv] could earn twenty shillings a day by singing ballads at Bishop's Stortford and places in the neighbourhood. The one had a squeaking treble, the other "an ale-blown bass."

One of the most popular singers of the early time was a boy named Cheeke, and nicknamed "Outroaring Dick." He was originally a mechanic, but renounced that life for ballad-singing, by which occupation he earned ten shillings a day. He was well known in Essex, and was not missed for many years from the great fair at Braintree. He had a rival in Will Wimbars, who sung chiefly doleful tragedies. Mat Nash, a man from the "North Countrie," made the Border ballads his own by his manner of singing them, in which he accompanied his voice by dramatic action. *Chevy Chase* was his *tour de force*. Lord Burghley was so pleased with his singing that he enabled him to retire from his occupation. The gipsies have furnished many female singers, and one of them, named Alice Boyce, who came to London in Elizabeth's reign, paid the expenses of her journey up to London by singing the whole way. She had the honour of singing, "O, the broom" and "Lady Green Sleeves" before the queen. Gravelot, the portrait painter in the Strand, had several sittings from ballad-singers; and Hogarth drew the famous "Philip in the Tub" in his *Wedding of the Industrious Apprentice*.

Street singing still continues, and one of the songs of thirty years ago tells of "the luck of a cove wot sings," and how many friends he has. One of the verses is as follows:—

"While strolling t'other night,
I dropped in a house, d'ye see;
The landlord so polite,
Insisted on treating me;
[Pg xxxv] I called for a glass of port,
When half-a-bottle he brings;
'How much?'—'Nothing of the sort,'
Says he, 'you're a cove wot sings.'"

Mr. Chappell gives a large number of early quotations relating to ballad-singing, in his interesting *History of Ballad Literature*, and observes that "some idea of the number of ballads that were printed in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth may be formed from the fact that seven hundred and ninety-six ballads left for entry at Stationers' Hall remained in the cupboard of the Council Chamber of the Company at the end of the year 1560, to be transferred to the new Wardens, and only forty-four books."[\[19\]](#) Some of the old writers, like Shakspeare's Mopsa, loved "a ballad in print;" but more of them disliked the new literature that was rising up like a mushroom, and took every opportunity of having a fling at it.

Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), refers to "the un-countable rabble of ryming ballet-makers and compylers of senseless sonnets;" and Chettle complains in *Kind Hart's Dream* (1592), that "now ballads are abusively chanted in every street; and from London, this evil has overspread Essex and the adjoining counties. There is many a tradesman of a worshipful trade, yet no stationer, who after a little bringing up apprentices to singing brokery, takes into his shop some fresh men, and trusts his servants of two months' standing with a dozen groats' worth of ballads, in which, if they prove thrifty, he makes them pretty chapmen, able to spread more pamphlets by the State forbidden than all the booksellers in London." Bishop Hall (1597) does not forget to satirize ballad-writing among other things more worthy of censure.

"Some drunken rhymers think their time well spent,
If he can live to see his name in print;
Who, when he is once fleshed to the presse,
And sees his handsell have such faire successe
Sung to the wheele and sung unto the payle,
He sends forth thraves of ballads to the sale."

That is, by the spinsters and milkmaids. Shakspeare also refers to the love which women at work have for a ballad in *Twelfth Night* (act i. sc. 4):

"The spinsters and knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones
Do use to chant it."

The larger number of ballads are anonymous, but we are told that in the reign of Henry VIII., "the most pregnant wits" were employed in writing them, and that the king himself set the example. The ballad, however, here referred to probably only meant an ordinary song. In course of time rhymesters succeeded poets, because, as the world becomes more educated, the poet confines himself to the refined, and the people have to content themselves with poor poetasters. Stirring times will, however, always give birth to some real poetry among the masses, because whatever is true and earnest must find an echo in many hearts. In Elizabeth's reign, as we have already seen, the ballad-writer had sunk very low in public esteem. In further illustration of this we find in *Martin Mar-sixtus* (1592) the following diatribe: "I lothe to speak it, every red-nosed rhymester is an auther, every drunken man's dream is a book; and he whose talent of little wit is hardly worth a farthing, yet layeth about him so outrageously as if all Helicon had run through his pen. In a word, scarce a cat can look out of a gutter, but out starts a halfpenny chronicler, and presently a proper new ballet of a strange sight is indited." The producer and the product [Pg xxxvii] had not greatly changed in forty years, for we find the following character in the curious little book, entitled *Whimzies, or a New Cast of Characters* (1631):

"A ballad-monger is the ignominious nickname of a penurious poet, of whom he partakes in nothing but in povertie. He has a singular gift of imagination, for he can descant on a man's execution long before his confession. Nor comes his invention far short of his imagination. For want of truer relations, for a neede, he can finde you out a Sussex dragon, some sea or inland monster, drawne out by some Shoe-lane man in a Gorgon-like feature, to enforce more horror in the beholder."

The chief of the ballad-writers were William Elderton, Thomas Deloney, Richard Johnson, and Anthony Munday. Elderton was known as the prince of ballad-mongers; but, unfortunately, he was as notorious for his love of the bottle, and he is said to have drunk himself to death before the year 1592. Camden tells us that "he did arm himself with ale (as old Father Ennius did with wine) when he ballated," and two epitaphs made upon him are registered in the *Remaines*, the Latin one of which is also printed at p. 221 of vol. ii., with Oldys's translation, and the following:—

"Here is Elderton lying in dust,
Or lying Elderton; chuse which you lust.
Here he lies dead, I do him no wrong,
For who knew him standing, all his life long?"

Nash asserts that "Elderton consumed his alecrammed nose to nothing in bear-bayting" an enemy "with whole bundells of ballets;" [20] and Gabriel Harvey attacks "Father Elderton and his son Greene as the ringleaders of the riming and

scribbling crew."

[Pg xxxviii]

According to Stow, Elderton was an attorney in the Sheriffs' Courts of the City of London, and wrote some verses on the new porch and stone statues at Guildhall. Ritson does not think that his poetical powers are to be compared with those of Deloney and Johnson. Drayton also appears to have had a low opinion of him, for he writes:—

"I scorn'd your ballad then, though it were done
And had for finis, William Elderton,"

but Benedick, in *Much Ado about Nothing* (act v. sc. 2) does him the honour of singing one of his songs:—

"The god of love
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me
How pitiful I deserve."

Thomas Deloney, the shoemaker's historiographer, was a voluminous writer of ballads, which he himself collected into Garlands, with different taking titles. Several of his pieces are printed in these volumes. Nash calls him "the balleting silk-weaver of Norwich;" and in his *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, he remarks on the ballad-maker's change of style: "He hath rhyme enough for all miracles, and wit to make a *Garland of Good Will*, &c., but whereas his muse, from the first peeping forth, hath stood at livery at an ale-house wisp, never exceeding a penny a quart, day or night—and this dear year, together with the silencing of his looms, scarce that—he is constrained to betake himself to carded ale, whence it proceedeth that, since Candlemas, or his jigg of *John for the King*, not one merry ditty will come from him; nothing but *The Thunderbolt against Swearers; Repent, England, Repent*, and the *Strange Judgments of God*." Kemp, the comic actor and morris-dancer, was particularly angry with the ballad-makers in general, and [Pg xxxix] Deloney in particular, and addresses them in the following terms:—

"Kemp's humble request to the impudent generation of Ballad-makers and their coherents, that it would please their rascalities to pittie his paines in the great journey he pretends, and not fill the country with lyes of his never done actes as they did in his late *Morrice to Norwich*. I knowe the best of ye, by the lyes ye writ of me, got not the price of a good hat to cover your brainless heds. If any of ye had come to me, my bounty should have exceeded the best of your good masters the ballad-buiers. I wold have apparrelled your dry pates in party-coloured bonnets, and bestowed a leash of my cast belles to have crown'd ye with cox-combs.

"I was told it was the great ballet-maker, T. D., alias Tho. Deloney, chronicler of the memorable lives of the 6 yeamen of the West, Jack of Newbery, the Gentle-Craft, and such like honest men, omitted by Stow, Hollinshead, Grafton, Hal, Froysart, and the rest of those wel deserving writers."[\[21\]](#)

Richard Johnson, the author of the *Seven Champions of Christendom*, like Deloney, collected his own ballads into a book, and his *Crown Garland of Golden Roses* was once highly popular.

Anthony Munday, a draper in Cripplegate, and a member of the Drapers' Company, has the fame of being a voluminous writer of ballads, but none of his productions are known to exist. Kemp calls him "Elderton's immediate heir," but he does not seem to have walked in his predecessor's disreputable steps, but to have lived respected to the good age of eighty. He died Aug. 10, 1633, and was buried in St. Stephen's, Coleman-street, where a monument with an inscription in praise of his knowledge as an antiquary was [Pg xl]erected. He wrote many of the annual city pageants, besides plays, which caused Meres to call him "the best plotter" of his age.

Chettle disguised Munday as Anthony Now-Now, and Ben Jonson ridiculed him in *The Case is Altered*, as Antonio Balladino, the pageant poet. To the question, "You are not the pageant poet to the city of Milan, are you?" he is made to answer, "I supply the place, sir, when a worse cannot be had, sir." He had several enemies who ran him down, but he also had friends who stood up for him. William Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie*, describes Munday as "an earnest traveller in this art," and says that he wrote "very excellent works, especially upon nymphs and shepherds, well worthy to be viewed and to be esteemed as rare poetry."

Thomas Middleton, the dramatic poet, who produced the Lord Mayor's pageant for the mayoralty of his namesake, Sir Thomas Middleton (*The Triumphs of Truth*), in 1613, attacks poor Munday most viciously. On the title-page he declares his pageant to have been "directed, written, and redeem'd into forme, from the ignorance of some former times and their common writer," and in his book he adds:—"The miserable want of both [art and knowledge] which in the impudent common writer hath often forced from me much pity and sorrow, and it would heartily grieve any understanding spirit to behold many times so glorious a fire in bounty and goodness offering to match itselfe with freezing art, sitting in darknesse with the candle out, looking like the picture of Blacke Monday."

When the civil war broke out, the majority of the poets were ready to range themselves on the side of the King. Alexander Brome was the most voluminous writer of royalist songs, but Martin Parker, the [Pg xli] writer of *The King shall enjoy his own again*, must take rank as the leading ballad-writer of his time. This was one of those songs that cheer the supporters of a losing cause, and help them to win success in the end. It is supposed to have formed a by no means unimportant item in the causes that brought about the Restoration. Parker is said to have been the leading spirit in a society of ballad-writers; he certainly was not the "Grub Street scribbler" that Ritson has called him. The Puritans hated this "ballad-maker laureat of London," and lost no opportunity of denouncing him and his works. Mr. Chappell has written an interesting notice of him in his *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, where he mentions some other royalist ballad writers, as John Wade, the author of *The Royal Oak*, Thomas Weaver, the author of a *Collection of Songs*, in which he ridiculed the Puritans so effectually that the book was denounced as a seditious libel against the Government, and John Cleveland, who, according to Anthony Wood, was the first to come forth as a champion of the royal cause. The last of these was one of the very few ballad writers whose names are enrolled in the list of British poets.

In December, 1648, Captain Betham was appointed Provost Marshal, with power to seize upon all ballad-singers, and five years from that date there were no more entries of ballads at Stationers' Hall, but when Cromwell became Protector he removed the ban against ballads and ballad-singers. After the Restoration, the courtier poets wrote for the streets, and therefore most of the ballads were ranged on the side of the Court. After a time, however, the Court fell into popular disfavour, and it was then discovered that ballad-singers and pamphleteers had too much liberty. Killigrew, the Master of the Revels to Charles II., licensed all [Pg xlii] singers and sellers of ballads, and John Clarke, a London bookseller, rented of Killigrew this privilege for a period, which expired in 1682. Besides licensers of the singers and sellers, there were licensers of the ballads themselves. These were Sir Roger L'Estrange, from 1663 to 1685, Richard Pocock, from 1685 to 1688, J. Fraser, from 1689 to 1691, and Edmund Bohun, who died in 1694, the year that the licensing system also expired.

When James, Duke of York, went to Scotland to seek for that popularity which he had lost in England, he is supposed to have taken with him an English ballad-maker to sing his praises, and this man is believed to have produced *The Banishment of Poverty by H. R. H. James, Duke of Albany*. Ballad-singing was very much out of favour among the authorities in the eighteenth century, and in 1716 the Middlesex grand jury denounced the singing of "scandalous" ballads about the streets as a common nuisance, tending to alienate the minds of the people. In July, 1763, we are told that "yesterday evening two women were sent to Bridewell by Lord Bute's order for singing political ballads before his lordship's door in South Audley Street."

Ballads were then pretty much the same kind of rubbish that they are now, and there was little to show that they once were excellent. The glorious days when—

"Thespis, the first professor of our art,

At country wakes sung ballads from a cart,"[\[22\]](#)

had long ago departed. There are but few instances of true poets writing for the streets in later times, but we have one in Oliver Goldsmith. In his early life in Dublin, when he often felt the want of a meal, he wrote [\[Pg xliii\]](#)ballads, which found a ready customer at five shillings each at a little bookseller's shop in a by-street of the city. We are informed that he was as sensitive as to the reception of these children of his muse as in after years he was of his more ambitious efforts; and he used to stroll into the street to hear his ballads sung, and to mark the degrees of applause with which they were received. Most of the modern ballad-writers have been local in their fame, as Thomas Hoggart, the uncle of Hogarth the painter, whose satiric lash made him a power in his native district of Cumberland, dreaded alike by fools and knaves.

The chief heroes of the older ballads were King Arthur and his knights, Robin Hood, and Guy of Warwick. The ballads relating to the first of these appear to have been chiefly chipped off from the great cycle of Arthurian romances. The popularity of Robin Hood was at one time so great that Drayton prophesied in his *Polyolbion*:—

"In this our spacious isle I think there is not one
But he hath heard some talk of him, and little John,
And to the end of time the tales shall ne'er be done
Of Scarlock, George a Green, and Much the Miller's son.
Of Tuck the merry Friar, which many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and their trade."

From a local hero he grew into national fame, and superseded Arthur in popular regard. He then sunk into a mere highwayman, to be again raised into fame by literary men, Ritson being the chief of these. Wakefield is still proud of its Pinder, who was one of Robin Hood's company—

"In Wakefield there lives a jolly Pinder;
In Wakefield all on a green,"

and one of the thoroughfares of that place is now called Pinder Field Road. Robin Hood was a purely[\[Pg xliv\]](#) English hero, but Guy of Warwick was almost as popular in foreign countries as in his own land. The earliest of English political ballads was an outcome of the Barons' wars in the reign of Henry III.,[\[23\]](#) and each period of political excitement since then has been represented in ballads. The controversies between Protestant and Papist were carried on in verse, and Laud and his clergy were attacked by the ballad-writers of the Puritan party.

Imitators and Forgers.

No attempt was made to produce false antique ballads until the true antiques had again risen in public esteem, and one of the first to deceive the connoisseurs was Lady Wardlaw, who was highly successful in her object when she gave *Hardyknute* to the world (see vol. ii. p. 105). She seems to have been quite contented with the success which attended the mystification, and does not appear to have taken any particular pains to keep her secret close. Suspicions were rife long before the publication of the *Reliques*, but when they appeared the whole truth came out. With regard to the other ballads, to which she had added verses, there does not appear to have been any attempt at concealment. The recent endeavour to attribute a large number of the romantic ballads of Scotland to her pen will be considered further on.

A large number of poets have imitated the old ballad, but very few have been successful in the attempt to give their efforts

the genuine ring of the original. Tickell and Goldsmith entered into the spirit of their models, but Scott succeeded best in [Pg xlv]old Elspeth's fragment of a chant (the Battle of Harlaw) in the *Antiquary*. W. J. Mickle, the translator of the *Lusiad*, contributed several imitations to Evans's *Collection of Old Ballads*, but although these are beautiful poems in themselves, their claim to antiquity was made to rest chiefly upon a distorted spelling. One of the most remarkably successful imitations of modern times is the ballad of *Trelawny*, which the late Rev. R. S. Hawker, of Morwenstow, wrote to suit the old burden of "And shall Trelawny die." This spirited ballad deceived Scott, Macaulay, and Dickens, who all believed it to be genuine, and quoted it as such. In 1846 it was actually printed by J. H. Dixon in his "Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England, taken down from oral tradition, and transcribed from private manuscripts, rare broadsides, and scarce publications," published by the Percy Society. Mr. Dixon was probably deceived by Davies Gilbert, who sent the ballad to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1827, and said that it formerly "resounded in every house, in every highway, and in every street." In 1832 Hawker had, however, himself acknowledged the authorship. He wrote in his *Records of the Western Shore* (p. 56), "With the exception of the chorus contained in the last two lines, this song was written by me in the year 1825. It was soon after inserted in a Plymouth paper. It happened to fall into the hands of Davies Gilbert, Esq., who did me the honour to reprint it at his private press at East Bourne, under the impression, I believe, that it is an early composition of my own. The two lines above-mentioned formed, I believe, the burthen of the old song, and are all that I can recover."[\[24\]](#) Hawker was fond of these mystifications, and although he did not care to lose the [Pg xlv]credit of his productions, he was amused to see another of his ballads, *Sir Beville*, find its way into a collection of old ballads.

A far more beautiful ballad than *Hardyknute* is *Auld Robin Gray*, in which a lady of rank caught the spirit of the tender songs of peasant life with excellent effect. Lady Anne Barnard kept her secret for fifty years, and did not acknowledge herself the author of it until 1823, when she disclosed the fact in a letter to Sir Walter Scott.

These were harmless attempts to deceive, such as will always be common among those who take a pleasure in reducing the pride of the experts; and when they were discovered no one was found to have been injured by the deceit. It is far different, however, when a forgery is foisted in among genuine works, because when a discovery is made of its untrustworthiness, the reputation of the true work is injured by this association with the false. Pinkerton inserted a large number of his own poems in his edition of *Select Scottish Ballads* (1783), which poems he alleged to be ancient. He was taken severely to task by Ritson on account of these fabrications, and he afterwards acknowledged his deceit.[\[25\]](#)

One of the most barefaced of literary deceptions was the work published in 1810 by R. H. Cromek, under the title of *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*. Although the ballads contained in these volumes are very varied in their subject, they were almost entirely composed by Allan Cunningham, who produced whatever was required of him by his employer.

Poets are often the worst of editors, as they find the temptation to "improve" their originals too strong to resist. Allan Cunningham published in [Pg xlvii]1826 a collection of the *Songs of Scotland*, in which he availed himself so largely of this license that Motherwell felt called upon to reprobate the work in the strongest terms. He observes: "While thus violating ancient song, he seems to have been well aware of the heinousness of his offending. He might shudder and sicken at his revolting task indeed! To soothe his own alarmed conscience, and, if possible, to reconcile the mind of his readers to his wholesale mode of hacking and hewing and breaking the joints of ancient and traditionary song; and to induce them to receive with favour the conjectural emendations it likes him to make, he, in the course of his progress, not unfrequently chooses to sneer at those, and to underrate their labours, who have used their best endeavours to preserve ancient song in its primitive and uncontaminated form."[\[26\]](#) These are by no means the hardest words used by Motherwell in respect to the *Songs of Scotland*.

The worst among the forgers, however, was a man who ought to have been above such dishonourable work, viz., Robert Surtees, the author of the *History of the County Palatine of Durham*, in whose honour the Surtees Society was founded. In Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* will be found three ballads—*The Death of Featherstonhaugh*, *Lord Ewrie*, and *Bartram's Dirge*, which are treated by Sir Walter as true antiques, and of the genuine character of which he never had a doubt. They are all three, however, mere figments of Surtees's imagination. Each of the ballads was accompanied by fictitious historical incidents, to give it an extra appearance of authenticity. *Featherstonhaugh* was said to be "taken down from the recitation of a woman eighty years of age, mother of one of the miners in Alston Moor;" [Pg xlviii]*Lord Ewrie* was obtained from "Rose Smith, of Bishop Middleham, a woman aged upwards of ninety-one;" and *Bartram's Dirge* from "Anne Douglas, an old woman who weeded in his (Surtees's) garden." On other occasions Sir Walter Scott was deluded by his friend with false information. Mr. George Taylor makes the following excuse in his *Life of Surtees* (p. 25): "Mr. Surtees no doubt had wished to have the success of his attempt tested by the unbiassed opinion of the very first authority on the subject, and the result must have been gratifying to him. But at a later period of their intimacy, when personal regard was added to high admiration for his correspondent, he probably would not have subjected him to the mortification of finding that he could be imposed on in a matter where he had a right to consider himself as almost infallible. And it was most likely from this feeling that Mr. Surtees never acknowledged the imposition: for so late as the year 1830, in which Scott dates his introduction to the edition of the *Minstrelsy*, published in 1831, the ballad of the *Death of Featherstonhaugh* retains its place (vol. i. p. 240) with the same expressions of obligation to Mr. Surtees for the communication of it, and the same commendation of his learned proofs of its authenticity." In spite of this attempted justification, we cannot fail to stigmatize Surtees's forgery as a crime against letters which fouls the very wells of truth.

Authenticity of Certain Ballads

As was to be expected, the existence of the forgeries just referred to caused several persons to doubt the genuineness of many of the true ballads. Finlay wrote, in 1808, "the mention of *hats* and *cork-heeled shoon* (in the ballad of *Sir Patrick Spence*) would lead[Pg xlix] us to infer that some stanzas are interpolated, or that its composition is of a comparatively modern date;"[27] and, in 1839, the veteran ballad-collector, Mr. David Laing, wrote as follows: "Notwithstanding the great antiquity that has been claimed for *Sir Patrick Spence*, one of the finest ballads in our language, very little evidence would be required to persuade me but that we were also indebted for it to Lady Wardlaw (*Stenhouse's Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland*, with additional notes to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, p. 320[27])." At p. 457[27] of the same book, Mr. Laing, after quoting from Finlay, made the following further observations: "Bishop Percy also remarks that 'an ingenious friend thinks the author of *Hardyknute* has borrowed several expressions and sentiments from the foregoing and other old Scottish songs in this collection.' It was this resemblance with the localities Dunfermline and Aberdour, in the neighbourhood of Sir Henry Wardlaw's seat, that led me to throw out the conjecture, whether this much-admired ballad might not also have been written by Lady Wardlaw herself, to whom the ballad of *Hardyknute* is now universally attributed." [28]

Mr. J. H. Dixon, in 1845, considered that the suspicion had become a certainty, and wrote of Lady Wardlaw as one "who certainly appears to have been [Pg l]a great adept at this species of literary imposture." "This celebrated lady is *now known* to be the author of *Edward! Edward!* and of *Sir Patrick Spence*, in addition to *Hardyknute*." [29] Mr. Dixon and the late Mr. Robert Chambers have also thrown out hints of their disbelief in the authenticity of the recitations of Mrs. Brown of Falkland.

These, however, were mere skirmishing attacks, but in 1859 Robert Chambers marshalled his forces, and made a decisive charge in his publication entitled *The Romantic Scottish Ballads, their Epoch and Authorship*. He there explains his belief as follows:—

"Upon all these considerations I have arrived at the conclusion that the high-class romantic ballads of Scotland are not ancient compositions—are not older than the early part of the eighteenth century—and are mainly, if not wholly, the production of one mind. Whose was this mind is a different question, on which no such confident decision may, for the present, be arrived at; but I have no hesitation in saying that, from the internal resemblance traced on from *Hardyknute* through *Sir Patrick Spence* and *Gil Morrice* to the others, there seems to be a great likelihood that the whole were the composition of the authoress of that poem, namely, Elizabeth Lady Wardlaw of Pitreavie."

Scotsmen were not likely to sit down tamely under an accusation by which their principal ballad treasures were thus stigmatized as false gems, and we find that several writers immediately took up their pens to refute the calumny. It will be seen that the charge is divided into two distinct parts, and it will be well to avoid mixing them together, and to consider each part separately.

[Pg li]

I. Certain ballads, generally supposed to be genuine, were really written by one person, in imitation of the antique.

II. The author of this deceit was Lady Wardlaw, the writer of *Hardyknute*.

I. The ballads in the *Reliques*, which are instanced by Chambers, are as follows:—

Sir Patrick Spence.

Gil Morrice.

Edward! Edward!

Jew's Daughter.

Gilderoy.

Young Waters.

Edom o' Gordon.

Bonny Earl of Murray.

Two of these (2 and 7) are in the Folio MS., which was written before Lady Wardlaw was born; *Edom o' Gordon* also exists in another old MS. copy; *Gilderoy* (5) is known to have been a street ballad, and the remainder are found in other copies. It is not necessary to discuss each of these cases separately, and we shall therefore reserve what we have to say for the special consideration of *Sir Patrick Spence*.

Before proceeding, we must first consider how far Chambers's previous knowledge of ballad literature prepared him for this inquiry; and we cannot rate that knowledge very highly, for in his *Collection of Scottish Songs*, he actually attributes Wotton's *Ye Meaner Beauties* to Darnley, and supposes Mary Queen of Scots to have been the subject of the author's praises. At this period also his scepticism had not been aroused, for all the ballads that he thought spurious in 1859 had been printed by him in 1829 as genuine productions.

To return to the main Point at issue. Chambers writes:—

[Pg lii]

"It is now to be remarked of the ballads published by the successors of Percy, as of those which he published, that there is not a particle of positive evidence for their having existed before the eighteenth century. Overlooking the one given by Ramsay in his *Tea-table Miscellany*, we have neither print nor manuscript of them before the reign of George III. They are

not in the style of old literature. They contain no references to old literature. As little does old literature contain any references to them. They wholly escaped the collecting diligence of Bannatyne. James Watson, who published a collection of Scottish poetry in 1706-1711, wholly overlooks them. Ramsay, as we see, caught up only one."

Mr. Norval Clyne (*Ballads from Scottish History*, 1863, p. 217) gives a satisfactory answer to the above. He writes:—

"The want of any ancient manuscript can be no argument against the antiquity of a poem, versions of which have been obtained from oral recitation, otherwise the great mass of ballads of all kinds collected by Scott, and by others since his time, must lie under equal suspicion. Bannatyne, in the sixteenth century, and Allan Ramsay, in the early part of the eighteenth, were not collectors of popular poetry in the same sense as those who have since been so active in that field. The former contented himself, for the most part, with transcribing the compositions of Dunbar, Henrysone, and other "makers," well known by name, and Ramsay took the bulk of his *Evergreen* from Bannatyne's MS. That a great many poems of the ballad class, afterwards collected and printed, must have been current among the people when the *Evergreen* was published, no one that knows anything of the subject will deny." The old ballads lived on the tongues of the people, and a small percentage of them only were ever committed to writing,[Pg liii] so that a fairer test of authenticity is the existence of various versions. Of known forgeries no varieties exist, but several versions of *Sir Patrick Spence* have been rescued from oblivion.

It is not probable that any fresh ballads will be obtained from recitation, but it is in some degree possible, as may be seen from an instance of a kindred nature in the field of language. We know that local dialects have almost passed away, and yet some of the glossaries of them lately issued contain words that explain otherwise dark passages in manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Chambers further affirms that the sentiment of these ballads is not congenial to that of the peasantry—"it may be allowably said, there is a tone of *breeding* throughout these ballads, such as is never found in the productions of rustic genius." This, however, is begging the question, for it does not follow that the songs of the peasantry were written by the peasantry. It is they who have remembered them, and held to them with greater tenacity than the educated classes.

We now come to the text that bears specially upon *Sir Patrick Spence*, and we will give it in Chambers's own words:—"The Scottish ladies sit bewailing the loss of Sir Patrick Spence's companions 'wi' the gowd kaims in their hair.' Sir Patrick tells his friends before starting on his voyage, 'Our ship must sail the faem;'[\[30\]](#) and in the description of the consequences of his shipwreck, we find 'Mony was the feather-bed that flattered on the faem.'[\[30\]](#) No old poet would use *faem* as an equivalent for the sea; but it was just such a phrase as a poet of the era of Pope would use in that sense." In the first place, we should be justified in saying that this test is not a [Pg liv]fair one, because no one will contend that the ballads have not been altered in passing from hand to hand, and new words inserted; but Mr. Norval Clyne has a complete answer for this particular objection; he writes: "Bishop Gawin Douglas completed his translation of Virgil's *Æneid* on 22nd July, 1513, and in his Prologue to the twelfth book are these lines:—

'Some sang ring-sangs, dancis, ledis, roundis,
With vocis schil, quhil all the dale resounds,
Quhareto they walk into their karoling,
For amourous layis dois all the rochis ring:
Ane sang 'The schip salis over the salt fame,
Will bring thir merchandis and my lemane hame.'

Here we have the expression, to which attention is called, occurring in a popular song in common use before the battle of Flodden. I have seen it remarked, however, that it is the elliptical use of 'sail the faem' for 'sail over the faem,' which

indicates an authorship not older than the day of Queen Anne. My answer to this objection shall also be an example from an 'old poet.' One of the *Tales of the Three Priests of Peblis* assigned to the early part of the sixteenth century, describes in homely verse the career of a thrifty burgess, and contains these lines (*Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, 1802):—

"Then bocht he wool, and wyselie couth it wey;
And efter that sone saylit he the sey."[\[31\]](#)

These quotations completely set aside one portion of the charge, and the other, in which an attempt is made to show that a similar form of expression is constantly occurring in the several poems, is really of little weight, pressed as it is with some unfairness. We have already seen that the old minstrels used certain forms of expression as helps to memory, and [Pg lvi]these recur in ballads that have little or no connection with each other. Chambers, following David Laing, uses Percy's note at the end of *Sir Patrick Spence*[\[32\]](#) as an engine of attack against the authenticity of the ballad, but there is really no reason for the conclusion he comes to, "that the parity he remarked in the expressions was simply owing to the two ballads being the production of one mind," for a copyist well acquainted with ballad literature would naturally adopt the expressions found in them in his own composition.

II. The consideration of the opinion that Lady Wardlaw was the author of *Sir Patrick Spence* and other ballads, need not detain us long, because the main point of interest is their authenticity, and the question of her authorship is quite a secondary matter: that falls to the ground if the grand charge is proved false, and need not stand even if that remains unrefuted. The only reason for fixing upon Lady Wardlaw appears to have been that as these ballads were transmitted to Percy by Lord Hailes, and one of them was an imitation of the antique by Lady Wardlaw, and another was added to by the same lady, therefore if a similarity between the ballads could be proved, it would follow that all were written by her. Now the very fact that the authorship of *Hardyknute* was soon discovered is strong evidence against any such supposition, because none of her associates had any suspicion that she had counterfeited other ballads, and could such a wholesale manufacture have been concealed for a century it would be a greater mystery than the vexed question, who was Junius? The other point, whether the author of the indistinct and redundant *Hardyknute* [Pg lvi]could have written the clear and incisive lines of *Sir Patrick Spence* may be left to be decided by readers who have the two poems before them in these volumes.

A few particulars may, however, be mentioned. The openings of these ballads form excellent contrasted examples of the two different styles of ballad writing. *Sir Patrick Spence* commences at once, like other minstrel ballads, with the description of the king and his council:—

"The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
O quhar will I get guid sailòr
To sail this schip of mine?

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailòr,
That sails upon the se."

The king then sends a letter to Spence. There is no description of how this was sent, but we at once read:—

"The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,

The teir blinded his ee."

Hardyknute, on the other hand, is full of reasons and illustrative instances in the true ballad-writer's style:—

"Stately stept he east the wa',
And stately stept he west,
Full seventy years he now had seen
Wi' scarce seven years of rest.
He liv'd when Britons breach of faith
Wrought Scotland mickle wae:
And ay his sword tauld to their cost,
He was their deadlye fae."

Having placed the openings of the two poems in opposition, we will do the same with the endings.[Pg lvii] How different is the grand finish of *Sir Patrick Spence*—

"Have owre, have owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feit."

from the feeble conclusion of *Hardyknute*:—

"'As fast I've sped owre Scotlands faes,'—
There ceas'd his brag of weir,
Sair sham'd to mind ought but his dame,
And maiden fairly fair.
Black fear he felt, but what to fear
He wist nae yet; wi' dread
Sai shook his body, sair his limbs,
And a' the warrior fled."

Sir Patrick Spence gives us a clear picture that a painter could easily reproduce, but *Hardyknute* is so vague that it is sometimes difficult to follow it with understanding, and if the same author wrote them both she must have been so strangely versatile in her talents that there is no difficulty in believing that she wrote all the romantic ballads of Scotland.

How little Chambers can be trusted may be seen in the following passage, where he writes: "The first hint at the real author came out through Percy, who in his second edition of the *Reliques* (1767) gives the following statement, 'There is more than reason,' &c.,[\[33\]](#) to which he adds the note: 'It is rather remarkable that Percy was not informed of these particulars in 1765; but in 1767, *Sir John Hope Bruce having died in the interval* (June, 1766), they were communicated to him. It looks as if the secret had hung on the life of this venerable gentleman." Who would suspect, what is the real fact of the case, that Percy's quoted preface was actually printed in his first edition [Pg lviii](1765), and that Chambers's remarks fall to the ground because they are founded on a gross blunder.[\[34\]](#)

Preservers of the Ballads.

Printed broadsides are peculiarly liable to accidents which shorten their existence, and we therefore owe much to the collectors who have saved some few of them from destruction. Ballads were usually pasted on their walls by the cottagers, but they were sometimes collected together in bundles. Motherwell had "heard it as a by-word in some parts of

Stirlingshire that a collier's library consists but of four books, the Confession of Faith, the Bible, a bundle of Ballads, and Sir William Wallace. The first for the gudewife, the second for the gudeman, the third for their daughter, and the last for the son, a selection indicative of no mean taste in these grim mold-warps of humanity." [35]

The love of a good ballad has, however, never been confined to the uneducated. Queen Mary II., after listening to the compositions of Purcell, played by the composer himself, asked Mrs. Arabella Hunt to sing Tom D'Urfey's ballad of "Cold and Raw," which was set to a good old tune, and thereby offended Purcell's vanity, who was left unemployed at the harpsichord. Nevertheless, the composer had the sense afterwards to introduce the tune as the bass of a song he wrote himself. When ballads were intended [Pg lix]for the exclusive use of the ordinary ballad-buyers they were printed in black letter, a type that was retained for this purpose for more than a century after it had gone out of use for other purposes. According to Pepys the use of black letter ceased about the year 1700, and on the title-page of his collection he has written "the whole continued down to the year 1700, when the form till then peculiar thereto, viz. of the black letter with pictures, seems (for cheapness sake) wholly laid aside for that of the white letter without pictures." White-letter printing of non-political street ballads really commenced about 1685, and of political ballads about half a century earlier. The saving referred to by Pepys as being made by the omission of woodcuts could not have been great, for they seldom illustrated the letterpress, and were used over and over again, so that cuts which were executed in the reign of James I. were used on ballads in Queen Anne's time.

Until about the year 1712 ballads were universally printed on broadsides, and those intended to be sold in the streets are still so printed, but after that date such as were intended to be vended about the country were printed so as to fold into book form.

The great ballad factory has been for many years situated in Seven Dials, where Pitts employed Corcoran and was the patron of "slender Ben," "over head and ears Nic," and other equally respectably named poets. The renowned Catnach lived in Seven Dials, and left a considerable business at his death. He was the first to print yards of songs for a penny, and his fame was so extended, that his name has come to be used for a special class of literature.

Although, thanks to the labours of far-sighted men, our stock of old ballads and songs is large, we[Pg lx] know that those which are irrevocably lost far exceed them in number. It is therefore something to recover even the titles of some of these, and we can do this to a considerable extent by seeking them in some of the old specimens of literature. In *Cockelbie's Sow*, a piece written about 1450, which was printed in Laing's *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1822), there is a list of the songs sung at a meeting. In Henryson's curious old pastoral, *Robin and Makyne* (vol. 2, p. 85), reference is made to the popular tales and songs, which were even then old:—

"Robin, thou hast heard sung and say,

In gests and storys auld,

"The man that will not when he may

Sall hav nocht when he wald."

To the prologues of Gawin Douglas's translation of Virgil's *Æneid*, we are indebted for a knowledge of four old songs, a fact that outweighs in the opinion of some the merits of the work itself, which was the first translation of a classic that ever appeared in England.

In the Catalogue of Captain Cox's Library, printed in Laneham's letter on the Kenilworth entertainments, there is a short list of some of the popular ballads of his time, but it is sorely tantalizing to read of "a bunch of ballets and songs all auncient," "and a hundred more he hath fair wrapt in parchment, and bound with a whipcord." We learn the names of ballads which were popular in old Scotland from the *Complaynt of Scotland*, a most interesting list, which Mr. Furnivall

has fully illustrated and explained in his edition of Laneham. Another source of information for learning the names of songs no longer known to exist are the medleys, which are made up of the first lines of many songs. The [Pg lxi] extreme popularity of ballads in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is reflected in the literature of the time, which is full of allusions to them. Burton, the anatomist of melancholy, who put a little of almost everything into his book, could not be expected to overlook ballads. He says: "The very rusticks and hog-rubbers ... have their wakes, whitson ales, shepherds' feasts, meetings on holy dayes, countrey dances, roundelayes ... instead of odes, epigrams and elegies, &c., they have their ballads, countrey tunes, *O the Broom, the bonny, bonny Broom*, ditties and songs, *Bess a Bell she doth excel*." The favourite songs of Father Rosin, the minstrel in Ben Jonson's *Tale of a Tub* (act i. sc. 2), are *Tom Tiler*, the *Jolly Joiner*, and the *Jovial Tinker*. The old drama is full of these references, and one of the most frequent modes of revenge against an enemy was to threaten that he should be *balladed*. Thus Massinger writes:—

"I will have thee
Pictur'd as thou art now, and thy whole story
Sung to some villainous tune in a lewd ballad,
And make thee so notorious in the world,
That boys in the street shall hoot at thee." [36]

Fletcher sets side by side as equal evils the having one's eyes dug out, and the having one's name sung

"In ballad verse, at every drinking house." [37]

The ballad-writers are called base rogues, and said to "maintaine a St. Anthonie's fire in their noses by nothing but two-penny ale." [38]

Shakspeare was not behind his contemporaries in his contemptuous treatment of "odious ballads," or of "these same metre ballad-mongers," but he has [Pg lxii] shown by the references in *King Lear* and *Hamlet* his high appreciation of the genuine old work, and there is no doubt that the creator of Autolycus loved "a ballad but even too well."

There have been two kinds of collectors, viz. those who copied such fugitive poetry as came in their way, and those who bought up all the printed ballads they could obtain.

Of the manuscript collections of old poetry, the three most celebrated are the Maitland MS. in the Pepysian Library, Cambridge, the Bannatyne MS. presented by the Earl of Hyndford to the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, and the famous folio MS. which formerly belonged to Percy, and is now in the British Museum. The Maitland MS., which contains an excellent collection of Scotch poetry, was formed by Sir Richard Maitland, of Lethington, Lord Privy Seal and Judge in the Court of Session (b. 1496, d. 1586). Selections from this MS. were printed by Pinkerton in 1786.

In the year 1568, when Scotland was visited by the Plague, a certain George Bannatyne, of whom nothing is known, retired to his house to escape infection, and employed his leisure in compiling his most valuable collection of Scottish poetry. This MS. was lent out of the Advocates' Library to Percy, and he was allowed to keep it for a considerable time. Sir David Dalrymple published "Some ancient Scottish Poems" in 1770, which were taken from this MS.

The great Lord Burghley was one of the first to recognize the value of ballads as an evidence of the popular feeling, and he ordered all broadsides to be brought to him as they were published. The learned Selden was also a collector of them, but the Chinese nation was before these wise men, and had realized an idea that has often been suggested in [Pg lxiii] Europe. One of their sacred books is the *Book of Songs*, in which the manners of the country are illustrated by songs and odes, the most popular of which were brought to the sovereign for the purpose.

The largest collections of printed ballads are now in Magdalene College, Cambridge, in the Bodleian at Oxford, and in the

British Museum. Some smaller collections are in private hands. In taking stock of these collections, we are greatly helped by Mr. Chappell's interesting preface to the *Roxburghe Ballads*. The Pepysian collection deposited in the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, consisting of 1,800 ballads in five vols., is one of the oldest and most valuable of the collections. It was commenced by Selden, who died in 1654, and continued by Samuel Pepys till near the time of his own death in 1703. Tradition reports that Pepys borrowed Selden's collection, and then "forgot" to return it to the proper owner. Besides these five volumes, there are three vols. of what Pepys calls penny merriments. There are 112 of these, and some are garlands that contain many ballads in each.

Cambridge's rival, Oxford, possesses three collections, viz. Anthony Wood's 279 ballads and collection of garlands, Francis Douce's 877 in four vols., and Richard Rawlinson's 218.

Previously to the year 1845, when the Roxburghe collection was purchased, there were in the British Museum Library about 1,000 ballads, but Mr. Chappell, without counting the *Roxburghe Ballads*, gives the number as 1292 in 1864. They are as follows:—

Bagford Collection	355
Volume of Miscellaneous Ballads and Poems, 17th century	31
Volume, mostly political, from 1641	250
Volume in King's Library, principally relating to London, from 1659 to 1711[Pg lxiv]	60
The Thomason Collection of Tracts	304
Satirical Ballads on the Popish Plot, from Strawberry Hill sale	27
Luttrell Collection, vol. ii.	255
Miscellaneous	10
	1292

The celebrated Roxburghe collection was bought by Rodd at Benjamin Heywood Bright's sale in 1845 for the British Museum, the price being £535. It was originally formed by Robert Harley, first Earl of Oxford, and as John Bagford was one of the buyers employed by the Earl, he is the reputed collector of the ballads. At the sale of the Harleian Library, this collection became the property of James West, P.R.S., and when his books were sold in 1773, Major Thomas Pearson bought it for, it is said, £20. This gentleman, with the assistance of Isaac Reed, added to the collection, and bound it in two volumes with printed title-pages, indexes, &c. In 1788, John, Duke of Roxburghe, bought it at Major Pearson's sale for £36 14s. 6d., and afterwards added largely to it, making a third volume. At the Duke's sale in 1813, the three volumes were bought for £477 15s., by Harding, who sold them to Mr. Bright for, it is supposed, £700. The collection consists of 1335 broadsides, printed between 1567 and the end of the eighteenth century, two-thirds of them being in black letter. Bright added a fourth volume of eighty-five pages, which was bought for the British Museum for £25 5s.

Some early ballads are included in the collection of broadsides in the library of the Society of Antiquaries, and a collection of proclamations and ballads was made by Mr. Halliwell Phillipps, and presented by him to the Chetham Library at Manchester.

The late George Daniel picked up a valuable collection of ballads at an old shop in Ipswich, which[Pg lxv] is supposed to have come from Helmingham Hall, Suffolk, where it had lain unnoticed or forgotten for two centuries or more. It originally numbered 175 to 200 ballads, but was divided by Daniel, who sold one portion (consisting of eighty-eight ballads) to Thorpe, who disposed of it to Heber. At Heber's sale it was bought by Mr. W. H. Miller, of Britwell, and from him it descended to Mr. S. Christie Miller. Twenty-five ballads known to have belonged to the same collection were edited

by Mr. Payne Collier for the Percy Society in 1840. The portion that Daniel retained was bought at the sale of his library by Mr. Henry Huth, who has reprinted seventy-nine of the best ballads. Other known private collections are five volumes belonging to Mr. Frederic Ouvry, President of the Society of Antiquaries, which contain Mr. Payne Collier's collection of Black-letter Ballads, the Earl of Jersey's at Osterley Park, and one which was formed by Mr. Halliwell Phillipps, who printed a full catalogue of the ballads contained in it, and then disposed of it to the late Mr. William Euing of Glasgow.

We owe our gratitude to all these collectors, but must also do honour to those writers who in advance of their age tried to lead their contemporaries to fresher springs than those to which they were accustomed. The first of these was Addison, who commented on the beauties of *Chevy Chase* and the *Children in the Wood* in the *Spectator*. He wrote: "it is impossible that anything should be universally tasted and approved by a multitude, though they are only the rabble of a nation, which hath not in it some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the mind of man."

Rowe was another appreciator of this popular literature, and his example and teaching may have had its influence in the publication of the first *Collection of Old Ballads*, for the motto to the first[Pg lxvi] volume is taken from the prologue to Rowe's *Jane Shore* (first acted in 1713):—

"Let no nice sir despise the hapless dame
Because recording ballads chaunt her name;
Those venerable ancient song enditers
Soar'd many a pitch above our modern writers.
They caterwauled in no romantic ditty,
Sighing for Philis's or Cloe's pity;
Justly they drew the Fair and spoke her plain,
And sung her by her Christian name—'twas Jane.
Our numbers may be more refined than those,
But what we've gain'd in verse, we've lost in prose;
Their words no shuffling double meaning knew,
Their speech was homely, but their hearts were true."

Parnell, Tickell, and Prior belonged to the small band who had the taste to appreciate the unfashionable old ballad. Prior says of himself in a MS. essay quoted by Disraeli in the *Calamities of Authors*: "I remember nothing further in life than that I made verses: I chose Guy Earl of Warwick for my first hero, and killed Colborne the giant before I was big enough for Westminster school." The few were, however, unable to convert the many, and Dr. Wagstaffe, one of the wits of the day, ridiculed Addison for his good taste, and in a parody of the famous essay on *Chevy Chase* he commented upon the *History of Tom Thumb*, and pretended to point out the congenial spirit of this poet with Virgil.

There is still another class of preservers of ballads to be mentioned, viz. those whose tenacious memories allow them to retain the legends and songs they heard in their youth, but as Prof. Aytoun writes: "No Elspats of the Craighburnfoot remain to repeat to grandchildren that legendary lore which they had acquired in years long gone by from the last of the itinerant minstrels." The most celebrated of these retailers of the old ballads was Mrs. Brown of Falkland, wife of the Rev. Dr. Brown, for from her both Scott and[Pg lxvii] Jamieson obtained some of their best pieces. Her taste for the songs and tales of chivalry was derived from an aunt, Mrs. Farquhar, "who was married to the proprietor of a small estate near the sources of the Dee in Braemar, a good old woman, who spent the best part of her life among flocks and herds, [but] resided in her latter years in the town of Aberdeen. She was possess of a most tenacious memory, which retained all the songs she had heard from nurses and countrywomen in that sequestered part of the country."[\[39\]](#) Doubts have been expressed as to the good faith of Mrs. Brown, but they do not appear to be well grounded. Another of these ladies from whose mouths we

have learnt so much of the ever-fading relics of the people's literature was Mrs. Arrot.

The earliest printed collection of Scottish popular poetry known to exist is a volume printed at Edinburgh, "by Walter Chepman and Androw Myllar, in the year 1508," which was reprinted in facsimile by David Laing in 1827. The next work of interest in the bibliography of ballads is "Ane Compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs, collected out of sundrie partes of the Scripture, with sundrie of other ballates, chainged out of prophaine songs for avoiding of Sinne and Harlotrie," printed in 1590 and 1621, and reprinted by J. G. Dalzell in 1801, and by David Laing in 1868. It contains parodies of some of the songs mentioned in the *Complaint of Scotland*, and is supposed to be the work of three brothers—James, John, and Robert Wedderburn, of Dundee. To the last of the three Mr. Laing attributed the *Complaint*, but Mr. Murray, the latest editor of that book, is unable to agree with him.

The first book of "prophane" songs published in Scotland was a musical collection entitled "Cantus [Pg lxviii]Songs and Fancies to several musicall parts, both apt for voices and viols: with a brief introduction to musick, as it is taught by Thomas Davidson in the Musick School of Aberdeen. Aberdeen, printed by John Forbes." 1662, 1666, and 1682.

The next work in order of time is "A Choise Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems, both ancient and modern, by several hands. Edinburgh, printed by James Watson." In three parts, 1706, 1709, 1710. Supposed to have been compiled by John Spottiswood, author of *Hope's Minor Practicks*.

All these works emanated from Scotchmen, and the only works of the same character that were published in England were small collections of songs and ballads, called Garlands and Drolleries. These are too numerous to be noticed here; but that they were highly popular may be judged from the fact that a thirteenth edition of *The Golden Garland of Princely Delight* is registered. The Garlands are chiefly small collections of songs on similar subjects. Thus, there were Love's Garlands, Loyal Garlands, Protestant Garlands, &c. Considerable pains seem to have been taken in order to obtain attractive titles for these little brochures. Thus, on one we read:—

"The sweet and the sower,
The nettle and the flower,
The thorne and the rose,
This garland compose."

Drolleries were collections of "jovial poems" and "merry songs," and some of them were confined to the songs sung at the theatres.

One of the first English collections of any pretensions was Dryden's *Miscellany Poems*, published in 1684-1708, which was shortly after followed by Tom D'Urfey's *Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, 1719-20. But the first attempt to bring together a large number of popular ballads, as distin[Pg lxix]guished from songs, was made in "A Collection of Old Ballads, corrected from the best and most ancient copies extant, with Introductions historical, critical, or humorous." London. Vols I. and II. 1723. Vol. III. 1725.

The object of most of the works referred to above was the publication of songs to be sung; the object of this one was the presentment of ballads to be read. It had a large sale, and the editor (who is said to have been Ambrose Phillips) expresses his satisfaction in the Preface to Vol. II.: "Though we printed a large edition for such a trifle, and in less than two months put it to the press again, yet could we not get our second edition out before it was really wanted." In spite, however, of its satisfactory reception, it does not appear to have taken any permanent position in literature, although it must have prepared the public mind to receive the *Reliques*. This collection contains one hundred and fifty-nine ballads, out of which number twenty-three are also in the *Reliques*.[\[40\]](#) Many of the others are of considerable interest, but some had better have been left unprinted, and all are of little critical value.

In the year after the first two volumes of the English collection were published, Allan Ramsay issued [Pg lxx]in Edinburgh "The Evergreen, being a collection of Scots poems wrote by the ingenious before 1600," the principal materials of which were derived from the Bannatyne MS. This was followed in the same year (1724) by "The Tea-Table Miscellany: a Collection of choice Songs, Scots and English," a work which is frequently referred to by Percy in the following pages. In neither of these works was Ramsay very particular as to the liberties he allowed himself in altering his originals. In order to make the volumes fit reading for his audience, which he hoped would consist of

"Ilka lovely British lass,
Frae ladies Charlotte, Ann, and Jean,
Down to ilk bonnie singing lass
Wha dances barefoot on the green,"

Ramsay pruned the songs of their indelicacies, and filled up the gaps thus made in his own way. The *Tea-table Miscellany* contains upwards of twenty presumably old songs, upwards of twelve old songs much altered, and about one hundred songs written by the editor himself, Crawford, Hamilton, and others.

In 1725, William Thomson, a teacher of music in London, brought out a collection of Scottish songs, which he had chiefly taken from the *Tea-table Miscellany* without acknowledgment. He called his book *Orpheus Caledonius*.

For some years before Percy's collection appeared, the Foulises, Glasgow's celebrated printers, issued from their press, under the superintendence of Lord Hailes, various Scottish ballads, luxuriously printed with large type, in a small quarto size.

These were the signs that might have shown the far-sighted man that a revival was at hand. At last the time came when, tired out with the dreary and leaden regularity of the verse-writers of the day, the people were ready to receive poetry fresh from na[Pg lxxi]ture. The man who arose to supply the want (which was none the less a want that it was an unrecognized one) was Thomas Percy, a clergyman living in a retired part of the country, but occasionally seen among the *literati* of the capital.

Life of Percy.

Thomas Percy was born on April 13th, 1729, at Bridgnorth in Shropshire, in a street called the Cartway. His father and grandfather were grocers, spelt their name Piercy, and knew nothing of any connection with the noble house of Northumberland.[41] His early education was received at the grammar school of Bridgnorth, and in 1746, being then in his eighteenth year, and having obtained an exhibition, he matriculated as a commoner at Christ Church, Oxford.

He took the degree of B.A. on May 2nd, 1750, that of M.A. on July 5th, 1753, and shortly after was presented by his college to the living of Easton Maudit, in the county of Northampton. In this poor cure he remained for twenty-five years, and in [Pg lxxii]the little vicarage his six children (Anne, Barbara, Henry, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Hester), were all born. Percy's income was increased in 1756 by the gift of the rectory of Wilby, an adjacent parish, in the patronage of the Earl of Sussex, and on April 24th, 1759, he married Anne, daughter of Barton Gutteridge,[42] who was his beloved companion for forty-seven years. It was to this lady, before his marriage to her, that Percy wrote his famous song, "O Nancy, wilt thou go with me?" Miss Matilda Lætitia Hawkins stated in her *Memoirs*, that these charming verses were intended by Percy as a welcome to his wife on her release from a twelve-month's confinement in the royal nursery, and Mr. Pickford follows her authority in his *Life of Percy*, but this is an entire mistake, for the song was printed as early as the year 1758 in the sixth volume of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*. Anyone who reads the following verses will see, that though appropriate as a lover's proposal, they are very inappropriate as a husband's welcome home to his wife.

"O Nancy, wilt thou go with me,
Nor sigh to leave the flaunting town?
Can silent glens have charms for thee,
The lowly cot and russet gown?
No longer drest in silken sheen,
No longer deck'd with jewels rare,
Say, canst thou quit each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

"O Nancy, when thou'rt far away,
Wilt thou not cast a wish behind?
Say, canst thou face the parching ray,
Nor shrink before the wintry wind?
O, can that soft and gentle mien
Extremes of hardship learn to bear,
Nor, sad, regret each courtly scene,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?
[Pg lxxiii]

"O Nancy, canst thou love so true,
Through perils keen with me to go?
Or, when thy swain mishap shall rue,
To share with him the pang of woe?
Say, should disease or pain befall,
Wilt thou assume the nurse's care?
Nor wistful, those gay scenes recall,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?

"And when at last thy love shall die,
Wilt thou receive his parting breath?
Wilt thou repress each struggling sigh,
And cheer with smiles the bed of death?
And wilt thou o'er his breathless clay
Strew flowers, and drop the tender tear?
Nor then regret those scenes so gay,
Where thou wert fairest of the fair?"

By the alteration of a few words, such as *gang* for *go*, *toun* for *town*, &c., "Oh Nanny, wilt thou gang with me?" was transposed into a Scotch song, and printed as such in Johnson's *Musical Museum*. Burns remarked on this insertion: "It is too barefaced to take Dr. Percy's charming song, and by the means of transposing a few English words into Scots, to offer it to pass for a Scots song. I was not acquainted with the editor until the first volume was nearly finished, else had I known in time I would have prevented such an impudent absurdity." Stenhouse, suggested[\[43\]](#) that Percy may have had in view the song called *The young Laird and Edinburgh Kate*, printed in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, the second stanza of which is somewhat similar—

"O Katy, wiltu gang wi' me,

And leave the dinsome town awhile?
The blossom's sprouting from the tree,
And a' the simmer's gawn to smile."

[Pg lxxiv]

Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, however, hinted[\[44\]](#) that "perhaps both the author of *The Young Laird and Edinburgh Katy*, and the Bishop, took the idea of their ballads from a song in Lee's beautiful tragedy of *Theodosius, or the Force of Love*."

Dr. Rimbault communicated this poem to the editors of the folio MS. from a MS. dated 1682, or fifteen years earlier than Lee's version. It is called *The Royal Nun*, and the first stanza is as follows:—

"Canst thou, Marina, leave the world,
The world that is devotion's bane,
Where crowns are toss'd and sceptres hurl'd,
Where lust and proud ambition reign?
Canst thou thy costly robes forbear,
To live with us in poor attire;
Canst thou from courts to cells repair
To sing at midnight in the quire?"[\[45\]](#)

The likeness in this stanza to Percy's song is not very apparent, and the subject is very different. The other three stanzas have nothing in common with *O Nancy*. Even could it be proved that Percy had borrowed the opening idea from these two poems, it does not derogate from his originality, for the charm of the song is all his own.

A portrait of Mrs. Percy holding in her hand a scroll inscribed *Oh Nancy*, is preserved at Ecton House, near Northampton, the seat of Mr. Samuel Isted, husband of Percy's daughter Barbara.

The song was set to music by Thomas Carter, and sung by Vernon at Vauxhall in 1773.

In 1761 Percy commenced his literary career by the publication of a Chinese novel, *Hau Kiau Chooan*, in four volumes, which he translated from the Portuguese, and in the same year he undertook to edit [Pg lxxv]the works of the Duke of Buckingham. In 1762 he published "Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the Chinese," and in 1763 commenced a new edition of Surrey's Poems, with a selection of early specimens of blank verse. The "Buckingham" and "Surrey" were printed, but never published, and the stock of the latter was destroyed by fire in 1808. In 1763 were published "Five Pieces of Runic Poetry—translated from the Icelandic Language," and in the following year appeared "A New Translation of the Song of Solomon from the Hebrew, with Commentary and Notes," and also "A Key to the New Testament." Dr. Johnson paid a long-promised visit to the Vicarage of Easton Maudit in the summer of 1764, where he stayed for some months, and the little terrace in the garden is still called after him, "Dr. Johnson's Walk." At this time Percy must have been full of anxiety about his *Reliques*, which were shortly to be published, and in the preparation of which he had so long been engaged. The poet Shenstone was the first to suggest the subject of this book, as he himself states in a letter to a friend, dated March 1, 1761. "You have heard me speak of Mr. Percy; he was in treaty with Mr. James Dodsley for the publication of our best old ballads in three volumes. He has a large folio MS. of ballads, which he showed me, and which, with his own natural and acquired talents, would qualify him for the purpose as well as any man in England. I proposed the scheme to him myself, wishing to see an elegant edition and good collection of this kind. I was also to have assisted him in selecting and rejecting, and fixing upon the best readings; but my illness broke off the correspondence in the beginning of winter."

In February, 1765, appeared the first edition of the *Reliques*, which gave Percy a name, and obtained[Pg lxxvi] for him the patronage of the great. He became Chaplain and Secretary to the Duke of Northumberland, with whose family he kept up intimate relations throughout his life. The Northumberland *Household Book*, which he compiled in accordance with the wishes of his patron, was privately printed in the year 1768.[46] In 1769 he was appointed Chaplain to George III., and in the following year appeared his translation of Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. Each of these three works was the first of its class, and created a taste which produced a literature of the same character. The *Household Book* gave rise to a large number of publications which have put us in possession of numerous facts relating to the domestic expenses and habits of the royal and noble families of old England. The mythology of the Eddas was first made known to English readers by Percy, and in his Preface to Mallet's work he clearly pointed out the essential difference between the Celtic and Teutonic races, which had previously been greatly overlooked.

The remuneration which Percy received for his labours was not large. Fifty pounds was the pay for the Chinese novel, and one hundred guineas for the first edition of the *Reliques*. The agreements he made with the Tonsons were fifty guineas for Buckingham's *Works* and twenty guineas for Surrey's *Poems*. He also agreed to edit the *Spectator* and *Guardian*, with notes, for one hundred guineas, but was obliged to abandon his intention on account of the engrossing character of his appointments in the Northumberland family.

About this time Mrs. Percy was appointed nurse [Pg lxxvii]to Prince Edward, the infant son of George III., afterwards Duke of Kent, and father of her present Majesty, who was born in 1767.

In 1770 Percy took his degree of D.D. at Cambridge, having incorporated himself at Emmanuel College, the master of which was his friend, Dr. Farmer, to be remembered as the Shakspeare commentator. Later on in the year he lost his eldest daughter, and in January, 1771, yet another child was buried in the village church. In 1771 he printed the *Hermit of Warkworth*, which exhibited his continued interest in the subject of the *Reliques*, and we find him for many years after this date continually writing to his literary correspondents for information relating to old ballads.

In 1778 Percy obtained the Deanery of Carlisle, which four years afterwards he resigned on being appointed to the bishopric of Dromore, worth £2,000 a year. He did not resign his vicarage and rectory until the same time, and he was succeeded in the first by Robert Nares, the compiler of the well-known glossary. It was in 1778 that the memorable quarrel between Percy and Johnson occurred which is graphically described by Boswell. The cause of the heat was the different views held by the two disputants as to the merits of the traveller Pennant. When the reconciliation was brought about Johnson's contribution to the peace was, "My dear sir, I am willing you shall hang Pennant."

In this same year Percy was writing about his son Henry, then a tall youth of fifteen, who he hoped in a few years would be able to edit the *Reliques* for him, but in April, 1783, soon after he had settled at Dromore, a great sorrow fell upon him, and this only and much-loved son died at the early age of twenty. In 1780 a large portion of Northumberland House, Strand, was consumed by[Pg lxxviii] fire, when Percy's apartments were burnt. The chief part of his library, was, however, saved. Four very interesting letters of the bishop's, written to George Steevens in 1796 and 1797, are printed in the *Athenæum* for 1848 (pp. 437 and 604). The first relates to his edition of Goldsmith's works, which was published in 1801 in four volumes octavo. His object in undertaking the labour was to benefit two surviving relations of Goldsmith, and he complains to Steevens that the publishers had thwarted him in his purpose. The second letter is on the same subject, and the third and fourth relate to his work on blank verse before Milton, attached to Surrey's *Poems*. In 1798 the Irish Rebellion broke out, and Percy sent a large quantity of correspondence and valuable books to his daughter, Mrs. Isted, for safe preservation at Ecton House. In 1806 his long and happy union with Mrs. Percy was abruptly brought to a close, and to add to his afflictions he became totally blind. He bore his trials with resignation, and ere five more years had passed by, he himself was borne to the tomb. On the 30th of September, 1811, he died in the eighty-third year of his age, having

outlived nearly all his contemporaries.[\[47\]](#)

That his attachment to "Nancy" was fervent as well as permanent, is shown by many circumstances. One of these is a little poem printed for the first time in the edition of the folio MS.[\[48\]](#)

"On leaving —— on a Tempestuous Night, March 22, 1788, by Dr. Percy.

"Deep howls the storm with chilling blast,
Fast falls the snow and rain,
Down rush the floods with headlong haste,
And deluge all the plain.
[Pg lxxix]

"Yet all in vain the tempest roars,
And whirls the drifted snow;
In vain the torrents scorn the shore,
To Delia I must go.

"In vain the shades of evening fall,
And horrid dangers threat,
What can the lover's heart appal,
Or check his eager feet?

"The darksome vale he fearless tries,
And winds its trackless wood;
High o'er the cliff's dread summit flies,
And rushes through the flood.

"Love bids atchieve the hardy task,
And act the wondrous part;
He wings the feet with eagle's speed,
And lends the lion-heart.

"Then led by thee, all-powerful boy,
I'll dare the hideous night;
Thy *dart* shall guard me from annoy,
Thy *torch* my footsteps light.

"The cheerful blaze—the social hour—
The friend—all plead in vain;
Love calls—I brave each adverse power
Of peril and of pain."

Percy had naturally a hot temper, but this cooled down with time, and the trials of his later life were accepted with Christian meekness. One of his relations, who as a boy could just recollect him, told Mr. Pickford "that it was quite a pleasure to see even then his gentleness, amiability, and fondness for children. Every day used to witness his strolling down to a pond in the palace garden, in order to feed his swans, who were accustomed to come at the well-known sound of the old man's voice." He was a pleasing companion and a steady friend. His duties, both in the retired country village and in the more elevated positions of dean and bishop, were all performed with a wisdom and ardour that gained[Pg lxxx]

him the confidence of all those with whom he was brought in contact. The praise given to him in the inscription on the tablet to his memory in Dromore Cathedral does not appear to have gone beyond the truth. It is there stated that he resided constantly in his diocese, and discharged "the duties of his sacred office with vigilance and zeal, instructing the ignorant, relieving the necessitous, and comforting the distressed with pastoral affection." He was "revered for his piety and learning, and beloved for his universal benevolence, by all ranks and religious denominations."

There are three portraits of Percy. The first and best known was painted by Reynolds in May, 1773. It represents him habited in a black gown and bands, with a loose black cap on his head, and the folio MS. in his hand. It is not known whether the original is still in existence, but engravings from it are common. The next was painted by Abbot in 1797, and hangs at Ecton Hall. Percy is there represented as a fuller-faced man, in his episcopal dress, and wearing a wig. We have Steevens's authority for believing this to be an excellent likeness. An engraving from it is prefixed to the "Percy Correspondence," in Nichols's *Illustrations of Literature*.

In the third volume of Dibdin's *Bibliographical Decameron* is a beautiful engraving from a watercolour drawing, which represents the bishop in his garden at Dromore, when totally blind, feeding his swans.[\[49\]](#)

[Pg lxxxix]

The Folio MS. and the "Reliques."

What were the sources from which Percy obtained the chief contents of his celebrated work? They were:—1. The folio MS.; 2. Certain other MS. collections, the use of which he obtained; 3. The Scotch ballads sent to him by Sir David Dalrymple (better known by his title of Lord Hailes, which he assumed on being appointed one of the Judges of the Court of Session in Edinburgh); 4. The ordinary printed broadsides; 5. The poems he extracted from the old printed collections of fugitive poetry—*The Paradise of Dainty Devices, England's Helicon, &c.*

In considering the above sources, it will be necessary to give some little space to the discussion of the connection between the folio MS. and the *Reliques*, as it is not generally understood by the ordinary readers of the latter.

The folio MS. came into Percy's hands early in his life, and the interest of its contents first caused him to think of forming his own collection. One of the notes on the covers of the MS. is as follows:—

"When I first got possession of this MS. I was very young, and being no degree an antiquary, I had not then learnt to reverence it; which must be my excuse for the scribble which I then spread over some parts of its margin, and, in one or two instances, for even taking out the leaves to save the trouble of transcribing. I have since been more careful. T. P."

He showed it to his friends, and immediately after the publication of the *Reliques* he deposited it at the house of his publishers, the Dodsleys, of Pall Mall. In spite of all this publicity, Ritson actually denied the very existence of the MS.

Another memorandum on the cover of the folio was written on Nov. 7, 1769. It is as follows:—

[Pg lxxxii]

"This very curious old manuscript, in its present mutilated state, but unbound and sadly torn, &c., I rescued from destruction, and begged at the hands of my worthy friend Humphrey Pitt, Esq., then living at Shiffnal, in Shropshire, afterwards of Priorslee, near that town; who died very lately at Bath (viz., in summer 1769). I saw it lying dirty on the floor, under a Bureau in y^e Parlour: being used by the maids to light the fire. It was afterwards sent, most unfortunately, to an ignorant Bookbinder, who pared the margin, when I put it into Boards in order to lend it to Dr. Johnson. Mr. Pitt has since told me that he believes the transcripts into this volume, &c., were made by that Blount who was author of *Jocular Tenures*, &c., who he thought was of Lancashire or Cheshire, and had a remarkable fondness for these old things. He

believed him to be the same person with that Mr. Thomas Blount who published the curious account of King Charles the 2^{ds} escape intituled *Boscobel*, &c., Lond. 1660, 12mo, which has been so often reprinted. As also the *Law Dictionary*, 1671, folio, and many other books which may be seen in Wood's *Athenæ*, ii. 73, &c. A Descendant or Relation of that Mr. Blount was an apothecary at Shiffnal, whom I remember myself (named also Blount). He (if I mistake not) sold the Library of the said predecessor Thos. Blount to the above-mentioned Mr. Humph^y Pitt: who bought it for the use of his nephew, my ever-valued friend Rob^t Binnel. Mr. Binnel accordingly had all the printed books, but this MS. which was among them was neglected and left behind at Mr. Pitt's house, where it lay for many years. T. Percy."

Mr. Furnivall believes that the copier of the MS. must have been a man greatly inferior to Thomas Blount, who was a barrister of the Middle Temple, of considerable learning.

[Pg lxxxiii]

Percy afterwards kept the volume very much to himself, and Ritson affirmed that "the late Mr. Tyrwhitt, an excellent judge and diligent peruser of old compositions, and an intimate friend of the owner, never saw it." [50] Although Jamieson was obliged by receiving a copy of three of the pieces in the MS., he was not allowed a sight of the volume, and no one else was permitted to make any use of it. This spirit of secrecy was kept up by the bishop's descendants, who refused all who applied to see it. Sir Frederic Madden alone was allowed to print some pieces in his *Syr Gawayne* for the Bannatyne Club, 1839. The public obtained a glimpse of its contents through Dr. Dibdin, who copied from Percy's list the first seventy-two entries, and would have finished the whole, had he not been stopped by his entertainers (Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Isted, of Ecton Hall), when they found out what he was about. He gave in his *Bibliographical Decameron* a description of the MS. which he thus handled in the winter of 1815. Mr. Furnivall writes as follows of his several attempts to get the MS. printed, and of his success at last: "The cause of the printing of Percy's MS., of the publication of the book, was the insistence time after time by Professor Child, that it was the duty of English antiquarian men of letters to print this foundation document of English balladry, the basis of that structure which Percy raised, so fair to the eyes of all English-speaking men throughout the world. Above a hundred years had gone since first the *Reliques* met men's view, a Percy Society had been born and died, but still the Percy manuscript lay hid in Ecton Hall, and no one was allowed to know how the owner who had made his fame by it had dealt with it, whether his treatment [Pg lxxxiv] was foul or fair. No list even of its contents could be obtained. Dibdin and Madden, and many a man less known had tried their hands, but still the MS. was kept back, and this generation had made up its mind that it was not to see the desired original in type.... I tried to get access to the MS. some half-a-dozen years ago. Repulsed, I tried again when starting the Early English Text Society. Repulsed again, I tried again at a later date, but with the like result. Not rebuffed by this, Professor Child added his offer of £50 to mine of £100, through Mr. Thurstan Holland, a friend of his own and of the owners of the MS., and this last attempt succeeded." The less said the better about the conduct of these owners who were only to be tempted to confer a public benefit by the increased offers of two private gentlemen, but there cannot be two opinions about the spirited conduct of Mr. Furnivall and Professor Child. The three volumes [51] that the printed edition of the MS. occupy, form a handsome monument of well-directed labour. The text is printed with the most careful accuracy under the superintendence of Mr. Furnivall, and the elaborate prefaces which exhibit that union of judgment and taste for which Mr. Hales is so well known, leave nothing to be desired.

"The manuscript itself is a 'scrubby, shabby paper' book, about fifteen and a half inches long by five and a half wide, and about two inches thick, which has lost some of its pages both at the beginning and end.... The handwriting was put by Sir F. Madden at after 1650 A.D.; by two authorities at the Record Office whom I consulted, in the reign of [Pg lxxxv] James I. rather than that of Charles I., but as the volume contains, among other late pieces, one on the siege of Newark in Charles I.'s time (ii. 33), another on the taking of Banbury in 1642 (ii. 39), and a third, *The King inioyes his rights againe*, which

contains a passage^[52] that (as Mr. Chappell observes in *Pop. Mus.* ii. 438, note 2) fixes the date of the song to the year 1643, we must make the date about 1650, though rather before than after, so far as I can judge. I should keep it in Charles I.'s reign, and he died Jan. 30, 1649, but within a quarter of a century one can hardly determine.... The dialect of the copier of the MS. seems to have been Lancashire, as is shown by the frequent use of the final *st*, *thoust* for *thou shalt*, *Ist* for *I will*, *youst* for *you will*, *unbethought* for *umbethought*, and the occurrence of the northern terms, like *strang*, *gange*, &c. &c. Moreover, the strong local feeling shown by the copier in favour of Lancashire and Cheshire, and the Stanleys, in his choice of *Flodden Feilde*, *Bosworth Feilde*, *Earles of Chester*, *Ladye Bessiye*, confirms the probability that he was from one of the counties named. That much, if not all, of the MS. was written from dictation and hurriedly is almost certain, from the continual miswriting of *they* for *the*, *rought* for *wrought*, *knight* for *night* (once), *me* fancy for *my* fancy, *justine* for *justing*."^[53]

A very erroneous impression has grown up as to the proportion of pieces in the *Reliques* which were taken from the MS. This is owing to a misleading statement made by Percy in his preface, to the effect that "the greater part of them are extracted from [Pg lxxxvi]an ancient MS. in the editor's possession, which contains near two hundred poems, songs, and metrical romances." The fact is that only one-fourth were so taken. The *Reliques* contain 180 pieces, and of these only forty-five^[54] are taken from the manuscript. We thus see that a very small part of the manuscript was printed by Percy. He mentions some of the other pieces in various parts of his [Pg lxxxvii]book, and he proposed to publish a fourth volume of the *Reliques* at some future period that never came.

Mr. Furnivall has the following remarks on the gains to literature by the publication of the manuscript: "It is more that we have now for the first time *Eger and Grime* in its earlier state, *Sir Lambewell*, besides the *Cavilere's* praise of his hawking, the complete versions of *Scottish Feilde* and *Kinge Arthur's Death*, the fullest of *Flodden Feilde* and the verse *Merline*, the *Earle of Westmorlande*, *Bosworth Feilde*, the curious poem of *John de Reeve*, and the fine alliterative one of *Death and Liffe*, with its gracious picture of Lady dame Life, awakening life and love in grass and tree, in bird and man, as she speeds to her conquest over death."

In 1774 Percy wrote: "In three or four years I intend to publish a volume or two more of old English and Scottish poems in the manner of my *Reliques*." And again in 1778: "With regard to the *Reliques*, I have a large fund of materials, which when my son has compleated his studies at the University, he may, if he likes it, distribute into one or more additional volumes." The death of this son put an end to his hopes, but before the fourth edition was required, the bishop had obtained the assistance of his nephew, the Rev. Thomas Percy. In 1801 he wrote as follows to Jamieson, who had asked for some extracts from the folio: "Till my nephew has completed his collection for the intended fourth volume it cannot be decided whether he may not wish to insert himself the fragments you desire; but I have copied for you here that one which you particularly pointed out, as I was unwilling to disappoint your wishes and expectations altogether. By it you will see the defective and incorrect state of the old text in the ancient folio MS., and the[Pg lxxxviii] irresistible demand on the editor of the *Reliques* to attempt some of those conjectural emendations, which have been blamed by one or two rigid critics, but without which the collection would not have deserved a moment's attention."

Percy has been very severely judged for the alterations he made in his manuscript authorities; and Ritson has attempted to consider his conduct as a question of morality rather than one of taste. As each point is noticed in the prefaces to the various pieces, it is not necessary to discuss the question here. It may, however, be remarked that, in spite of all Ritson's attacks (and right was sometimes on his side), the *Reliques* remain to the present day un superseded.

Mr. Thoms communicated to the *Notes and Queries* (5th series, v. 431) the following note, which he made upwards of forty years ago, after a conversation with Francis Douce:—

"Mr. Douce told me that the Bishop (Percy) originally intended to have left the manuscript to Ritson; but the reiterated

abuse with which that irritable and not always faultless antiquary visited him obliged him to alter his determination. With regard to the alterations (? amendments) made by Percy in the text, Mr. Douce told me that he (Percy) read to him one day from the MS., while he held the work in his hand to compare the two; and 'certainly the variations were greater than I could have expected,' said my old friend, with a shrug of the shoulders."

Of the other sources from which Percy drew his materials little need be said. 2. Some of the ballads were taken from MSS. in public libraries, and others from MSS. that were lent to him. 3. The Scotch ballads supplied by Sir David Dalrymple have already been referred to. 4. The printed ballads[Pg lxxxix] are chiefly taken from the Pepys Collection at Cambridge. 5. When the *Reliques* were first published, the elegant poems in the *Paradyse of Daynty Devises, England's Helicon*, were little known, and it was a happy thought on the part of Percy to intersperse these smaller pieces among the longer ballads, so as to please the reader with a constant variety.

The weak point in the book is the insertion of some of the modern pieces. The old minstrel believed the wonders he related; but a poet educated in modern ideas cannot transfer himself back to the times of chivalry, so that his attempts at imitating "the true Gothic manner" are apt to fill his readers with a sense of unreality.

After the first edition of the *Reliques* was printed, and before it was published, Percy made a great alteration in its arrangement. The first volume was turned into the third, and the third into the first, as may be seen by a reference to the foot of the pages where the old numbering remains. By this means the *Arthur Ballads* were turned off to the end, and *Chevy Chase* and *Robin Hood* obtained the place of honour. Several ballads were also omitted at the last moment, and the numbers left vacant. These occur in a copy of two volumes at Oxford which formerly belonged to Douce. In Vol. III. (the old Vol. I.), Book 1, there is no No. 19; in the Douce copy this is filled by *The Song-birds*. In Vol. II., Book 3, there are no Nos. 10 and 11; but in the Douce copy, Nos. 9, 10, and 11 are *Cock Lorrell's Treat*, *The Moral Uses of Tobacco*, and *Old Simon the Kinge*. Besides these omissions it will be seen that in Book 3 of Vol. III. there are two Nos. 2; and that *George Barnwell* must have been inserted at the last moment, as it occupies a duplicate series of pages 225-240, which are printed between brackets. In 1765 the volumes were published in London. In[Pg xc] the following year a surreptitious edition was published in Dublin, and in 1767 appeared a second edition in London. In 1775 was published the third edition, which was reprinted at Frankfort in 1790. The fourth edition, ostensibly edited by the Rev. Thomas Percy, but really the work of the bishop himself, was published in 1794. Many improvements were made in this edition, and it contains Percy's final corrections; the fifth edition, published in 1812, being merely a reprint of the fourth.

The year 1765 was then a memorable one in the history of literature. The current ballads which were bawled in the street, or sung in the ale-house, were so mean and vulgar that the very name of ballad had sunk into disrepute. It was therefore a revelation to many to find that a literature of nature still existed which had descended from mother to child in remote districts, or was buried in old manuscripts, covered with the dust of centuries. It is necessary to realize this state of things in order to understand Percy's apologetic attitude. He collected his materials from various sources with great labour, and spared no pains in illustrating the poetry by instructive prose. Yet after welding with the force of genius the various parts into an harmonious whole, he was doubtful of the reception it was likely to obtain, and he called the contents of his volumes "the barbarous productions of unpolished ages." He backed his own opinion of their interest by bringing forward the names of the chiefs of the republic of letters, and ill did they requite him. Johnson parodied his verses, and Warburton sneered at him as the man "who wrote about the Chinese." Percy looked for his reward where he received nothing but laughter; but the people accepted his book with gladness, and the young who fed upon the food he presented to them grew up to found new schools of poetry.

[Pg xci]

Few books have exerted such extended influence over English literature as Percy's *Reliques*. Beattie's *Minstrel* was

inspired by a perusal of the *Essay on the Ancient Minstrels*; and many authors have expressed with gratitude their obligations to the bishop and his book.

How profoundly the poetry of nature, which lived on in the ballads of the country, stirred the souls of men is seen in the instance of two poets of strikingly different characteristics. Scott made his first acquaintance with the *Reliques* at the age of thirteen, and the place where he read them was ever after imprinted upon his memory. The bodily appetite of youth was unnoticed while he mentally devoured the volumes under the huge leaves of the plantain tree. Wordsworth was not behind Scott in admiration of the book. He wrote: "I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this work, and for our own country, its poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think there is an able writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligation to the *Reliques*. I know that it is so with my friends; and for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own." After such men as these have spoken, who can despise our old ballads?

Ballad Literature since Percy.

The impetus given to the collection of old ballads by the publication of *Reliques* showed itself in the rapid succession of volumes of the same class which issued from the press. Most of these were devoted to the publication of Scottish ballads exclusively. In 1769, David Herd, a native of St. Cyrus, in Kincardineshire, who had spent most of his life as clerk in an accountant's office in Edinburgh, published his *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c.*, a work which was enlarged into two volumes in 1776.^[55] He was a most successful and faithful collector, and not being a poet, he was preserved from the temptation of tampering with his stores. Motherwell mentions twenty ballads which had not appeared in a collected form before the publication of this work. Herd was assisted in his editorial labours by George Paton.

In 1777 appeared the first edition of Evans's *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative*, in two volumes. The best edition of this work, edited by the son of the original compiler, was published in 4 vols., 1810.

In 1781 Pinkerton published his *Scottish Tragic Ballads*, which was followed in 1783 by *Select Scottish Ballads*. These volumes contained several fabrications by the editor, as already stated on a previous page.

In 1783 Ritson commenced the publication of that long series of volumes which is of such inestimable value to the literary antiquary, with *A Select Collection of English Songs*. *The Bishopric Garland, or Durham Minstrel*, followed, in 1784; *The Yorkshire Garland*, in 1788; the *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, in 1791; *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the reign of Henry II. to the Revolution*, in 1787; *The Northumberland Garland*, in 1793; *Scottish Songs*, in 1794; and *Robin Hood*, in 1795.

In 1787 was commenced *The Scots Musical Museum*, by James Johnson. Johnson was a music-seller and engraver in Edinburgh, and the work was really projected by William Tytler of Woodhouselee, Dr. Blacklock, and Samuel Clark. The first volume was partly printed, when Burns became acquainted with the object of the work. He then entered into the scheme with enthusiasm, and besides "begging and borrowing" old songs, wrote many new songs himself.

In 1801 was published at Edinburgh, *Scottish Poems of the XVIth Century*, edited by J. G. Dalzell, which contains a reprint of *Ane Compendious Booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs*, already referred to above.

In 1802 appeared the first two volumes of the only work which is worthy to stand side by side with the *Reliques*. Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* is a book that can be read through, and it and the *Reliques* are the only works of the class in which the materials are welded into a whole, so as no longer to appear a collection of units.

In 1806, Robert Jamieson published at Edinburgh his *Popular Ballads and Songs, from Tradition, Manuscripts, and scarce*

editions. He was working upon this book at the same time that Scott was engaged upon his *Minstrelsy*, and he obtained much of his material from the same source as Scott, viz. Mrs. Brown, of Falkland; but he, nevertheless, was able to print seventeen ballads that had not before appeared in any published collection. Jamieson has the following remarks on himself in the Introduction to the first volume:—

"Being obliged to go, at a few weeks' warning, to a distant part of the world, and to seek, on the shores of the frozen Baltic, for (which his own country seems to deny him) the means of employing his talents and industry in some such manner as may enable him to preserve (for a time, at least) his respectability and a partial independence in the world, the following[Pg xciv] sheets have been prepared for the press, amidst all the anxiety and bustle of getting ready and packing up for a voyage." (Vol. i. p. xvii.)

John Finlay of Glasgow published in 1808 his *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads*. These volumes only contain twenty-six ballads in all.

John Gilchrist's *Collection of Ancient and Modern Scottish Ballads, Tales, and Songs*, (Edinburgh 1815) is a carefully edited work, compiled from former books.

In 1822 David Laing published his valuable *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland*, and in 1824 C. K. Sharpe printed privately a little volume which he entitled *A Ballad Book*. James Maidment printed also privately *A North Countrie Garland* in the same year (1824).

In 1825 E. V. Utterson printed "Select Pieces of Early English Poetry, republished principally from early printed copies in Black Letter."

Peter Buchan commenced his ballad career by publishing at Peterhead, in 1825, a little volume entitled "Gleanings of Scotch, English, and Irish scarce old ballads, chiefly tragical and historical, many of them connected with the localities of Aberdeenshire." In 1828 he published his "Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland, hitherto unpublished." He affirmed that his materials were faithfully and honestly transcribed, and "they have suffered no change since they fortunately were consigned to me by their foster parents." A portrait is given in this book, which represents the compiler as a wild-looking, unkempt, man. Besides these two books Buchan made a large collection of ballads, songs, and poems, which he took down from the oral recitation of the peasantry. These were pronounced by Scott to be "decidedly and indubitably original." The two folio MS. volumes in which they[Pg xcv] were contained came into the possession of the Percy Society, and a selection was made from them by J. H. Dixon, in 1845, who entitled his work *Scottish Traditional Versions of Ancient Ballads* (Percy Society Publications, vol. xvii.).

In 1826 Allan Cunningham published *The Songs of Scotland*, to which reference has already been made.

George R. Kinloch published in 1827, "Ancient Scottish Ballads, recovered from tradition, and never before published." He states in his introduction that "the present collection is almost entirely composed of ballads obtained in the 'North Countrie,' a district hitherto but little explored, though by no means destitute of traditional poetry."

In this same year appeared William Motherwell's *Minstrelsy, Ancient and Modern*, a work of the most sterling character, which contains the best account of ballad literature extant.

In 1829 Robert Chambers published his collection of *Scottish Ballads*, which contains eighty pieces, of which number twelve are modern, or imitations. At this period the editor had not elaborated his theory that *Sir Patrick Spence* and certain other ballads were modern imitations.

Peter Cunningham published *The Songs of England and Scotland*, in 1835, and Thomas Wright printed *The Political Songs of England from the reign of John to that of Edward II.* in 1839, for the Camden Society.

In 1840 was founded, in honour of Bishop Percy, the Percy Society, which continued to print some of the old Garlands and various collections of old Ballads until 1852.

William Chappell published in 1840 his valuable *Collection of National English Airs, consisting of Ancient Song, Ballad and Dance Tunes*, which[Pg xcvi] work was re-arranged and enlarged, and issued in 1855 as *Popular Music of the Olden Time*. This work is a mine of wealth concerning both the airs and the words of our ballad treasures. It was a truly national undertaking, and has been completed with great skill. No ballad lover can get on without it.

In 1844 Alexander Whitelaw published *The Book of Scottish Ballads*, and *The Book of Scottish Song*. An edition of the former was printed in 1875, and one of the latter in 1866, which contains about twelve hundred and seventy songs.

In 1847 John Matthew Gutch published "*A Lytell Geste of Robin Hode*, with other Ancient and Modern Ballads and Songs relating to this celebrated yeoman."

In the same year appeared Frederick Sheldon's *Minstrelsy of the English Border*, but it is a work of very little value.

Dr. Rimbault printed in 1850 those valuable *Musical Illustrations of Bishop Percy's Reliques*, which are so frequently quoted in the following pages.

Professor Francis James Child, of Harvard College, one of our greatest authorities on Ballad lore, published at Boston, U.S., a very complete collection of *English and Scottish Ballads*, in eight volumes. The first volume contains a full list of the principal collections of Ballads and Songs.

In 1858 William Edmondstoune Aytoun published his *Ballads of Scotland*, which contain collated versions of one hundred and thirty-nine ballads, with short introductions.

The year 1867 was memorable as seeing the publication of the first instalment of the Folio Manuscript under the editorship of J. W. Hales and F. J. Furnivall.

[Pg xcvi]

In 1868 appeared "Scottish Ballads and Songs, historical and traditionary, edited by James Maidment, Edinburgh, 1868," 2 vols. The number of pieces is small but select, and the introductions are full and elaborate.

In 1871 Messrs. Ogle of Glasgow published a well edited collection of Scottish Ballads, with an interesting introduction and notes, entitled "The Ballad Minstrelsy of Scotland. Romantic and Historical. Collated and Annotated."

Upon the completion of the Percy Folio, Mr. Furnivall started the Ballad Society, for the publication of the various collections of ballads that exist. Mr. Chappell has edited half of the Roxburghe Ballads in several parts, and Mr. Furnivall himself has printed some interesting ballads from manuscripts. All these have been presented to readers with a wealth of illustrative notes.

The books referred to above form but a portion of the literature of the subject. So mighty has been the growth of the small seed set by Percy, that the despised outcasts which the literary leaders attempted to laugh out of existence have made good their right to a high position among the poetry of the nation, and proved that they possessed the germs of a long and vigorous life.

H. B. W.

[Pg xcvi]

[Pg 1]





TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
ELIZABETH,
COUNTESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND;
IN HER OWN RIGHT,
BARONESS PERCY, LUCY, POYNINGS, FITZ-PAYNE, BRYAN, AND LATIMER.

Madam,—



Those writers, who solicit the protection of the noble and the great, are often exposed to censure by the impropriety of their addresses: a remark that will, perhaps, be too readily applied to him, who, having nothing better to offer than the rude songs of ancient minstrels, aspires to the patronage of the Countess of Northumberland, and hopes that the barbarous productions of unpolished ages can obtain the approbation or notice of her, who adorns courts by her presence, and diffuses elegance by her example.

But this impropriety, it is presumed, will disappear, when it is declared that these poems are presented to your Ladyship, not as labours of art, but as effusions of nature, showing the first efforts of ancient genius, and exhibiting the customs and[Pg 2] opinions of remote ages: of ages that had been almost lost to memory, had not the gallant deeds of your illustrious ancestors preserved them from oblivion.

No active or comprehensive mind can forbear some attention to the reliques of antiquity. It is prompted by natural curiosity to survey the progress of life and manners, and to inquire by what gradations barbarity was civilized, grossness refined, and ignorance instructed; but this curiosity, Madam, must be stronger in those who, like your Ladyship, can remark in every period the influence of some great progenitor, and who still feel in their effects the transactions and events of distant centuries.

By such bonds, Madam, as I am now introducing to your presence, was the infancy of genius nurtured and advanced, by such were the minds of unlettered warriors softened and enlarged, by such was the memory of illustrious actions preserved and propagated, by such were the heroic deeds of the Earls of Northumberland sung at festivals in the hall of Alnwick; and those songs, which the bounty of your ancestors rewarded, now return to your Ladyship by a kind of hereditary right; and, I flatter myself, will find such reception as is usually shown to poets and historians, by those whose consciousness of merit makes it their interest to be long remembered.

I am,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's

Most humble,

And most devoted Servant,

Thomas Percy.[\[56\]](#)

[Pg 3]

TO

ELIZABETH,

LATE DUCHESS AND COUNTESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND,

IN HER OWN RIGHT BARONESS PERCY,

ETC. ETC. ETC.

WHO, BEING SOLE HEIRESS TO MANY GREAT FAMILIES OF OUR ANCIENT NOBILITY, EMPLOYED THE PRINCELY FORTUNE, AND SUSTAINED THE ILLUSTRIOUS HONOURS, WHICH SHE DERIVED FROM THEM, THROUGH HER WHOLE LIFE WITH THE GREATEST DIGNITY, GENEROSITY, AND SPIRIT; AND WHO FOR HER MANY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VIRTUES WILL EVER BE REMEMBERED AS ONE OF THE FIRST CHARACTERS OF HER TIME, THIS LITTLE WORK WAS ORIGINALLY DEDICATED; AND, AS IT SOMETIMES AFFORDED HER AMUSEMENT, AND WAS HIGHLY DISTINGUISHED BY HER INDULGENT APPROBATION, IT IS NOW, WITH THE UTMOST REGARD, RESPECT, AND GRATITUDE, CONSECRATED TO HER BELOVED AND HONOURED MEMORY.[\[57\]](#)

[Pg 4]



ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FOURTH EDITION.[\[58\]](#)



Twenty years have near elapsed since the last edition of this work appeared. But, although it was sufficiently a favourite with the public, and had long been out of print, the original editor had no desire to revive it. More important pursuits had, as might be expected, engaged his attention; and the present edition would have remained unpublished, had he not yielded to the importunity of his friends, and accepted the humble offer of an editor in a nephew, to whom, it is feared, he will be found too partial.

These volumes are now restored to the public with such corrections and improvements as have occurred since the former impression; and the text in particular hath been emended in many passages by recurring to the old copies. The instances, being frequently trivial, are not always noted in the margin; but the alteration hath never been made without good reason;

and especially in such pieces as were extracted from the folio manuscript so often mentioned in the following pages, where any variation [Pg 5]occurs from the former impression, it will be understood to have been given on the authority of that MS.

The appeal publicly made to Dr. Johnson in the first page of the following Preface, so long since as in the year 1765, and never once contradicted by him during so large a portion of his life, ought to have precluded every doubt concerning the existence of the MS. in question. But such, it seems, having been suggested, it may now be mentioned, that, while this edition passed through his press, the MS. itself was left for near a year with Mr. Nichols, in whose house, or in that of its possessor, it was examined with more or less attention by many gentlemen of eminence in literature. At the first publication of these volumes it had been in the hands of all, or most of, his friends; but, as it could hardly be expected that he should continue to think of nothing else but these amusements of his youth, it was afterwards laid aside at his residence in the country. Of the many gentlemen above-mentioned, who offered to give their testimony to the public, it will be sufficient to name the Honourable Daines Barrington, the Reverend Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode, and those eminent Critics on Shakespeare, the Reverend Dr. Farmer, George Steevens, Esq., Edmund Malone, Esq., and Isaac Reed, Esq., to whom I beg leave to appeal for the truth of the following representation.

The MS. is a long narrow folio volume, containing 195 Sonnets, Ballads, Historical Songs, and Metrical Romances, either in the whole or in part, for many of them are extremely mutilated and imperfect. The first and last leaves are wanting; and of fifty-four pages near the beginning half of every leaf hath been torn away, and several others are injured towards the end; besides that through a great part[Pg 6] of the volume the top or bottom line, and sometimes both have been cut off in the binding.

In this state is the MS. itself: and even where the leaves have suffered no injury, the transcripts, which seem to have been all made by one person (they are at least all in the same kind of hand), are sometimes extremely incorrect and faulty, being in such instances probably made from defective copies, or the imperfect recitation of illiterate fingers; so that a considerable portion of the song or narrative is sometimes omitted; and miserable trash or nonsense not unfrequently introduced into pieces of considerable merit. And often the copyist grew so weary of his labour as to write on without the least attention to the sense or meaning; so that the word which should form the rhyme is found misplaced in the middle of the line; and we have such blunders as these, *want and will* for *wanton will*;[\[59\]](#) even *pan and wale* for *wan and pale*,[\[60\]](#) &c., &c.

Hence the public may judge how much they are indebted to the composer of this collection; who, at an early period of life, with such materials and such subjects, formed a work which hath been admitted into the most elegant libraries; and with which the judicious antiquary hath just reason to be satisfied, while refined entertainment hath been provided for every reader of taste and genius.

Thomas Percy,

Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford.

[Pg 7]



THE PREFACE



The reader is here presented with select remains of our ancient English bards and minstrels, an order of men, who were once greatly respected by our ancestors, and contributed to soften the roughness of a martial and unlettered people by their songs and by their music.

The greater part of them are extracted from an ancient folio manuscript, in the editor's possession, which contains near 200 poems, songs, and metrical romances. This MS. was written about the middle of the last century; but contains compositions of all times and dates, from the ages prior to Chaucer, to the conclusion of the reign of Charles I.[\[61\]](#)

This manuscript was shewn to several learned and ingenious friends, who thought the contents too curious to be consigned to oblivion, and importuned the possessor to select some of them, and give them to the press. As most of them are of great simplicity, and seem to have been merely written for the people, he was long in doubt, whether, in the present state of improved literature, they could be deemed [\[Pg 8\]](#)worthy the attention of the public. At length the importunity of his friends prevailed, and he could refuse nothing to such judges as the author of the *Rambler* and the late Mr. Shenstone.

Accordingly such specimens of ancient poetry have been selected, as either shew the gradation of our language, exhibit the progress of popular opinions, display the peculiar manners and customs of former ages, or throw light on our earlier classical poets.

They are here distributed into volumes, each of which contains an independent series of poems, arranged chiefly according to the order of time, and shewing the gradual improvements of the English language and poetry from the earliest ages down to the present. Each volume, or series, is divided into three books, to afford so many pauses, or resting-places to the reader, and to assist him in distinguishing between the productions of the earlier, the middle, and the latter times.

In a polished age, like the present, I am sensible that many of these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them. Yet have they, for the most part, a pleasing simplicity, and many artless graces, which in the opinion of no mean critics[\[62\]](#) have been thought to compensate for the want of higher beauties, and, if they do not dazzle the imagination, are frequently found to interest the heart.

To atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems, each volume concludes with a few modern attempts in the same kind of writing: and, to take off from the tediousness of the longer narratives, [\[Pg 9\]](#)they are everywhere intermingled with little elegant pieces of the lyric kind. Select ballads in the old Scottish dialect, most of them of the first-rate merit, are also interspersed among those of our ancient English minstrels; and the artless productions of these old rhapsodists are occasionally confronted with specimens of the composition of contemporary poets of a higher class; of those who had all the advantages of learning in the times in which they lived, and who wrote for fame and for posterity. Yet perhaps the palm will be frequently due to the old strolling minstrels, who composed their rhymes to be sung to their harps, and who looked no farther than for present applause, and present subsistence.

The reader will find this class of men occasionally described in the following volumes, and some particulars relating to their history in an Essay subjoined. (Appendix I.)

It will be proper here to give a short account of the other collections that were consulted, and to make my acknowledgements to those gentlemen who were so kind as to impart extracts from them; for, while this selection was making, a great number of ingenious friends took a share in the work, and explored many large repositories in its favour.

The first of these that deserved notice was the Pepysian library at Magdalen College, Cambridge. Its founder, Sam. Pepys, Esq.,[\[63\]](#) Secretary of the Admiralty in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. had made a large collection of ancient English [Pg 10]ballads, near 2,000 in number, which he has left pasted in five volumes in folio; besides Garlands and other smaller miscellanies. This collection he tells us was "begun by Mr. Selden; improved by the addition of many pieces elder thereto in time; and the whole continued down to the year 1700; when the form peculiar till then thereto, viz., of the black letter with pictures, seems (for cheapness sake) wholly laid aside for that of the white letter without pictures."

In the Ashmole Library at Oxford is a small collection of ballads made by Anthony Wood in the year 1676, containing somewhat more than 200. Many ancient popular poems are also preserved in the Bodleyan library.

The archives of the Antiquarian Society at London contain a multitude of curious political poems in large folio volumes, digested under the several reigns of Hen. VIII., Edw. VI., Mary, Elizabeth, James I., &c.[\[65\]](#)

In the British Museum is preserved a large treasure of ancient English poems in MS. besides one folio volume of printed ballads.

From all these some of the best pieces were selected; and from many private collections, as well printed, as manuscript, particularly from one large folio volume which was lent by a lady.

Amid such a fund of materials, the editor is afraid he has been sometimes led to make too great a parade of his authorities. The desire of being accurate has perhaps seduced him into too minute and trifling an exactness; and in pursuit of information he may have been drawn into many a petty and frivolous research. It was, however, necessary to [Pg 11]give some account of the old copies; though often, for the sake of brevity, one or two of these only are mentioned, where yet assistance was received from several. Where any thing was altered that deserved particular notice, the passage is generally distinguished by two inverted 'commas.' And the editor has endeavoured to be as faithful as the imperfect state of his materials would admit. For, these old popular rhymes being many of them copied only from illiterate transcripts, or the imperfect recitation of itinerant ballad-singers, have, as might be expected, been handed down to us with less care than any other writings in the world. And the old copies, whether MS. or printed, were often so defective or corrupted, that a scrupulous adherence to their wretched readings would only have exhibited unintelligible nonsense, or such poor meagre stuff, as neither came from the bard, nor was worthy the press; when, by a few slight corrections or additions, a most beautiful or interesting sense hath started forth, and this so naturally and easily, that the editor could seldom prevail on himself to indulge the vanity of making a formal claim to the improvement; but must plead guilty to the charge of concealing his own share in the amendments under some such general title, as a *Modern Copy*, or the like. Yet it has been his design to give sufficient intimation where any considerable liberties[\[66\]](#) were taken with the old copies, and to have retained either in the text or margin any word or phrase which was antique, obsolete, unusual, or peculiar, so that these might be safely quoted as of genuine and undoubted antiquity. His object was to please both the judicious antiquary, and the reader of taste; and he hath endeavoured to gratify both without offending either.

[Pg 12]

The plan of the work was settled in concert with the late elegant Mr. Shenstone, who was to have borne a joint share in it had not death unhappily prevented him[\[67\]](#): most of the modern pieces were of his selection and arrangement, and the editor hopes to be pardoned if he has retained some things out of partiality to the judgment of his friend. The old folio MS. above-mentioned was a present from Humphrey Pitt, Esq., of Prior's-Lee, in Shropshire,[\[68\]](#) to whom this public acknowledgement is due for that, and many other obliging favours. To Sir David Dalrymple, Bart., of Hailes, near Edinburgh, the editor is indebted for most of the beautiful Scottish poems with which this little miscellany is enriched, and for many curious and elegant remarks with which they are illustrated. Some obliging communications of the same kind

were received from John MacGowan, Esq., of Edinburgh; and many curious explanations of Scottish words in the glossaries from John Davidson, Esq., of Edinburgh, and from the Rev. Mr. Hutchinson, of Kimbolton. Mr. Warton, who has twice done so much honour to the Poetry Professor's chair at Oxford, and Mr. Hest, of Worcester College, contributed some curious pieces from the Oxford libraries. Two ingenious and learned friends at Cambridge deserve the editor's warmest acknowledgements: to Mr. Blakeway, late fellow of Magdalen College, he owes all the assistance received from the Pepysian library: and Mr. Farmer, fellow of Emanuel, often exerted, in favour of this little work, that extensive knowledge of ancient English literature for which he is so distinguished.^[69] Many extracts from ancient MSS. in the British Museum, and other repositories, were owing to the kind services of Thomas Astle, Esq., to whom the public is indebted for the curious Preface and Index annexed to the Harleyan Catalogue.^[70] The worthy Librarian of the Society of Antiquaries, Mr. Norris, deserved acknowledgement for the obliging manner in which he gave the editor access to the volumes under his care. In Mr. Garrick's curious collection of old plays are many scarce pieces of ancient poetry, with the free use of which he indulged the editor in the politest manner. To the Rev. Dr. Birch he is indebted for the use of several ancient and valuable tracts. To the friendship of Dr. Samuel Johnson he owes many valuable hints for the conduct of the work. And, if the Glossaries are more exact and curious than might be expected in so slight a publication, it is to be ascribed to the supervisal of a friend, who stands at this time the first in the world for northern literature, and whose learning is better known and respected in foreign nations than in his own country. It is, perhaps, needless to name the Rev. Mr. Lye, editor of *Junius's Etymologicum*, and of the *Gothic Gospels*.

The names of so many men of learning and character the editor hopes will serve as an amulet to guard him from every unfavourable censure, for having bestowed any attention on a parcel of old ballads. It was at the request of many of these gentlemen, and of others eminent for their genius and taste, that this little work was undertaken. To prepare it for the press has been the amusement of now and then a vacant hour amid the leisure and retirement of rural life, and hath only served as a relaxation from graver studies. It has been taken up at different times, and often thrown aside for many months, during an interval of four or five years. This has occasioned some inconsistencies and repetitions, which the candid reader will pardon. As great care has been taken to admit nothing immoral and indecent, the editor hopes he need not be ashamed of having bestowed some of his idle hours on the ancient literature of our own country, or in rescuing from oblivion some pieces (though but the amusements of our ancestors) which tend to place in a striking light their taste, genius, sentiments, or manners.

Except in one paragraph, this Preface is given with little variation from the first edition in MDCCLXV.



[Pg 16]

[Pg 17]



RELIQUES OF ANCIENT POETRY, ETC.

BOOK I.



[Pg 18]

I never heard the olde song of Percy and Duglas, that I found not my heart mooved more then with a trumpet: and yet is it sung but by some blinde crouder, with no rougher voyce, then rude stile; which being so evill apparelled in the dust and cobwebbes of that uncivill age, what would it worke, trymmmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar!—*Sir Philip Sidney's Apologie for Poetrie*, 1595.

[Pg 19]



I.

THE ANCIENT BALLAD OF CHEVY CHASE.



The fine heroic song of *Chevy-Chase* has ever been admired by competent judges. Those genuine strokes of nature and artless passion, which have endeared it to the most simple readers, have recommended it to the most refined; and it has equally been the amusement of our childhood, and the favourite of our riper years.

Mr. Addison has given an excellent critique[\[71\]](#) on this very popular ballad, but is mistaken with regard to the antiquity of the common-received copy; for this, if one may judge from the style, cannot be older than the time of Elizabeth, and was probably written after the elogium of Sir Philip Sidney: perhaps in consequence of it. I flatter myself, I have here recovered the genuine antique poem; the true original song, which appeared rude even in the time of Sir Philip, and caused him to lament, that it was so evil-apparelled in the rugged garb of antiquity.

This curiosity is printed, from an old manuscript,[\[72\]](#) at the end of Hearne's preface to *Gul. Newbrigiensis Hist.* 1719, 8vo. vol. i. To the MS. copy is subjoined the name of the author, Rychard Sheale;[\[73\]](#) whom Hearne had so little judgement as to suppose to be the same with a R. Sheale, who was living in 1588. But whoever examines the gradation of language and idiom in the following volumes, will be convinced that this is the production [Pg 20]of an earlier poet. It is indeed expressly mentioned among some very ancient songs in an old book intituled, *The Complaint of Scotland*[\[74\]](#) (fol. 42), under the title of the *Huntis of Chevet*, where the two following lines are also quoted:—

"The Perssee and the Mongumrye mette,[75]

That day, that day, that gentil day:"[76]

which, tho' not quite the same as they stand in the ballad, yet differ not more than might be owing to the author's quoting from memory. Indeed whoever considers the style and orthography of this old poem will not be inclined to place it lower than the time of Henry VI.: as on the other hand the mention of James the Scottish King,[77] with one or two anachronisms, forbids us to assign it an earlier date. King James I. who was prisoner in this kingdom at the death of his father,[78] did not wear the crown of Scotland till the second year of our Henry VI.,[79] but before the end of that long reign a third James had mounted the throne.[80] A succession of two or three Jameses, and the long detention of one of them in England, would render the name familiar to the English, and dispose a poet in those rude times to give it to any Scottish king he happened to mention.

So much for the date of this old ballad: with regard to its subject, altho' it has no countenance from history, there is room to think it had originally some foundation in fact. It was one of the Laws of the Marches frequently renewed between the two nations, that neither party should hunt in the other's borders, without leave from the proprietors or their deputies.[81] There had long been a [Pg 21]rivalship between the two martial families of Percy and Douglas, which heightened by the national quarrel, must have produced frequent challenges and struggles for superiority, petty invasions of their respective domains, and sharp contests for the point of honour; which would not always be recorded in history. Something of this kind, we may suppose, gave rise to the ancient ballad of the *Hunting a' the Cheviat*. [82] Percy earl of Northumberland had vowed to hunt for three days in the Scottish border without condescending to ask leave from earl Douglas, who was either lord of the soil, or lord warden of the marches. Douglas would not fail to resent the insult, and endeavour to repel the intruders by force; this would naturally produce a sharp conflict between the two parties: something of which, it is probable, did really happen, tho' not attended with the tragical circumstances recorded in the ballad: for these are evidently borrowed from the *Battle of Otterbourn*, [83] a very different event, but which after-times would easily confound with it. That battle might be owing to some such previous affront as this of Chevy Chase, though it has escaped the notice of historians. Our poet has evidently jumbled the two subjects together: if indeed the lines, [84] in which this mistake is made, are not rather spurious, and the after-insertion of some person, who did not distinguish between the two stories.

Hearne has printed this ballad without any division of stanzas, in long lines, as he found it in the old written copy; but it is usual to find the distinction of stanzas neglected in ancient MSS.; where, to save room, two or three verses are frequently given in one line undivided. See flagrant instances in the *Harleian Catalogue*, No. 2253, s. 29, 34, 61, 70, *et passim*.

[Bishop Percy did well to open his book with *Chevy Chase* and the *Battle of Otterburn*, as these two are by far the most remarkable of the old historical ballads still left to us, and all Englishmen must feel peculiar interest in *Chevy Chase*, as it is one of the few northern ballads that are the exclusive growth of the south side of the Border. The partizanship of the Englishman is very amusingly brought out in verses 145-154, where we learn that the Scotch king had no captain in his realm equal to the dead Douglas, but that the English king had a hundred captains as good as Percy. A ballad which stirred the soul of Sidney and caused Ben Jonson to wish that he had been the author of it rather than [Pg 22]of all his own works cannot but be dear to all readers of taste and feeling. The old version is so far superior to the modern one (see Book iii. No. 1) that it must ever be a source of regret that Addison, who elegantly analyzed the modern version, did not know of the original.

It will be well to arrange under three heads the subjects on which a few words require to be added to Percy's preface, viz. 1. the title, 2. the occasion, 3. the author. 1. In the old version the title given in the ballad itself is *the hunting of the Cheviat*, and in the *Complaynt of Scotlande* it is referred to as *The Huntis of Chevot*. The title of the modern version is changed to *Chevy Chase*, which Dr. E. B. Nicholson has suggested to be derived from the old French word *chevauchée*, a

foray or expedition (see *Notes and Queries*, 3rd series, vol. xii. p. 124); but this explanation is not needed, as the original of the modern title is found in ver. 62 as *Chyviat Chays*, which naturally became contracted into *Chevy Chase*, as *Teviotdale* into *Tevidale* (ver. 50).

2. The ballad is so completely unhistorical that it is difficult to give any opinion as to the occasion to which it refers, but apparently it was written, as Bishop Percy remarks, to commemorate a defiant expedition of one of the Lords of the Marches upon the domain of another, but that the names of Percy and Douglas led the writer into a confusion with the battle of Otterburn, which was fresh in the people's memory owing to the ballad of the *Battle of Otterburn*. In fact Professor Child throws out the hint that possibly Sidney referred to the *Battle of Otterburn* and not to the *Hunting of the Cheviat*, as he only mentions the old song of *Percie and Douglas*, but it has so long been believed that Sidney spoke of *Chevy Chase* that we should be sorry to think otherwise now. In the note immediately following the modern version (see Book iii. No. 1.) Bishop Percy suggests the possibility that the ballad may refer to the battle of Pepperden fought in 1436, but this view is highly improbable for the following reason. In both the ancient and modern versions the battle of Humbledown is alluded to as a future event caused by the death of Percy at Chevy Chase. Now as Humbledown was fought in the year 1402, and as the battle of Otterburn was the only conflict of importance on the Borders which preceded it, and as, moreover, Otterburn is mentioned in the ballad, there cannot well be any reference to a battle fought so many years afterwards.

3. Bishop Percy is unnecessarily severe in his remark upon Hearne, as that learned antiquary was probably correct in identifying the Richard Sheale of the old ballad with Richard Sheale the minstrel. Whether, however, the latter was the author, as is argued by C. in Brydges' *British Bibliographer* (vol. 4, pp. 95-105), is another matter. The other examples of the minstrel's [Pg 23] muse are so inferior to this ballad that it is impossible to believe him to be the author. Doubtless it was recited by him, and being associated with his name the transcriber may naturally have supposed him to be its maker. Sheale really flourished (or withered, as Mr. Hales has it) at a rather earlier period than the date 1588 mentioned by Percy would lead us to imagine, for he appears to have been writing before 1560, nevertheless the language is of a much earlier date than this, and, moreover, a ballad of the Borders is not likely to have been invented at Tamworth, where Sheale lived.

Chevy Chase was long a highly popular song, and Bishop Corbet, in his *Journey into France*, speaks of having sung it in his youth. The antiquated beau in Davenant's play of the *Wits* also prides himself on being able to sing it, and in *Wit's Intpreter*, 1671, a man when enumerating the good qualities of his wife, cites after the beauties of her mind and her patience "her curious voice wherewith she useth to sing *Chevy Chace*." Many other ballads were sung to the same tune, so that we are not always sure as to whether the original is referred to or some more modern song. The philosopher Locke, when Secretary to the Embassy sent by Charles II. to the Elector of Brandenburg, wrote home a description of the Brandenburg church singing, in which he says, "He that could not though he had a cold make better music with a chevy chace over a pot of smooth ale, deserved well to pay the reckoning and to go away athirst." [85] The writer here probably referred to any song sung to this tune.]

THE FIRST FIT. [86]



The Persé owt of Northombarlande.

And a vowe[87] to God mayd he,
That he wolde hunte in the mountayns
Off Chyviat within dayes thre,
In the mauger[88] of doughtè Dogles,[89]5
And all that ever with him be.
[Pg 24]

The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat
He sayd he wold kill, and cary them away:
Be my feth, sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,
I wyll let[90] that hontyng yf that I may.10

Then the Persé owt of Banborowe cam,[91]
With him a myghtye meany;[92]
With fifteen hondrith archares bold;[93]
The wear chosen out of shyars thre.[94]

This begane on a monday at morn15
In Cheviat the hillys so he;[95]
The chyld may rue that ys un-born,
It was the mor pitté.

The dryvars thorowe the woodes went[96]
For to reas[97] the dear;20
Bomen bickarte uppone the bent[98]
With ther browd aras[99] cleare.

Then the wyld[100] thorowe the woodes went
On every syde shear;[101]
Grea-hondes thorowe the greves glent[102]25
For to kyll thear dear.

The begane in Chyviat the hyls abone[103]
Yerly[104] on a monnyn-day;[105]
Be[106] that it drewe to the oware off none[107]
[Pg 25] A hondrith fat hartes ded ther lay.30

The blewe a mort uppone the bent,[108][109]
The semblyd on sydis shear;[110]
To the quyrry[111] then the Persè went
To se the bryttlynge[112] off the deare.

He sayd, It was the Duglas promys35
This day to meet me hear;
But I wyste he wold faylle verament:[113]
A gret oth the Persè swear.

At the laste a squyar of Northombelonde

Lokyde at his hand full ny,40

He was war ath[\[114\]](#) the doughetie Doglas comynge:

With him a myghtè meany,[\[115\]](#)

Both with spear, 'byll,' and brande:[\[116\]](#)[\[117\]](#)

Yt was a myghti sight to se.

Hardyar men both off hart nar hande45

Wear not in Christiantè.

The wear twenty hondrith spear-men good

Withouten any fayle;[\[118\]](#)

The wear borne a-long be the watter a Twyde,

Yth[\[119\]](#) bowndes of Tividale.50

Leave off the brytlyng of the dear, he sayde,

And to your bowys look ye tayk good heed;[\[120\]](#)

For never sithe[\[121\]](#) ye wear on your mothars borne

Had ye never so mickle need.[\[122\]](#)

[Pg 26]

The dougheti Dogglas on a stede55

He rode all his men beforne;[\[123\]](#)

His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede;[\[124\]](#)

A bolder barne[\[125\]](#) was never born.

Tell me 'what' men ye ar, he says,[\[126\]](#)

Or whos men that ye be:60

Who gave youe leave to hunte in this

Chyviat chays in the spyt of me?

The first mane that ever him an answeare mayd,

Yt was the good lord Persè:

We wyll not tell the 'what' men we ar, he says,[\[127\]](#)65

Nor whos men that we be;

But we wyll hount hear in this chays

In the spyte of thyne, and of the.

The fattiste hartes in all Chyviat

We have kyld, and cast[\[128\]](#) to carry them a-way.70

Be my troth, sayd the doughtè Dogglas agayn,[\[129\]](#)

Ther-for the ton[\[130\]](#) of us shall de this day.

Then sayd the doughtè Doglas

Unto the lord Persè:

To kyll all thes giltless men,75

A-las! it wear great pittè.

But, Persè, thowe art a lord of lande,

I am a yerle^[131] callyd within my contre;
Let all our men uppone a parti^[132] stande;
And do the battell off the and of me.⁸⁰

Nowe Cristes cors^[133] on his crowne,^[134] sayd the lord Persè.^[135]
Who-soever ther-to says nay.

Be my troth, doughtè Doglas, he says,
[Pg 27] Thow shalt never se that day;

Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nar France,⁸⁵
Nor for no man of a woman born,
But and^[136] fortune be my chance,
I dar met him on man for on.^[137]^[138]

Then bespayke a squyar off Northombarlonde,
Ric. Wytharynton^[139] was his nam;⁹⁰
It shall never be told in Sothe-Ynglonde, he says,
To kyng Herry the fourth for sham.

I wat^[140] youe byn great lordes twaw,^[141]
I am a poor squyar of lande;

I wyll never se my captayne fyght on a fylde,⁹⁵
And stande my-selffe, and looke on,
But whyll I may my weppone welde,
I wyll not 'fayl' both harte and hande.

That day, that day, that dredfull day:
The first Fit^[142] here I fynde.¹⁰⁰
And youe^[143] wyll here any mor athe hountyng a the Chyviat,
Yet ys ther mor behynde.

[Pg 28]

THE SECOND FIT.



The Yngglishe men hade ther bowys yebent,
Ther hartes were good yenoughe;
The first of arros that the shote off,^[144]
Seven skore spear-men the sloughe.^[145]

Yet bydys^[146] the yerle Doglas uppon the bent,^[147]⁵
A captayne good yenoughe,
And that was sene verament,

For he wrought hom both woo and wouche.[\[148\]](#)

The Dogglas pertyd his ost in thre,

Lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde,10

With suar[\[149\]](#) speares off myghttè tre

The cum[\[150\]](#) in on every syde.

Thrughe our Yngglishe archery

Gave many a wounde full wyde;

Many a doughete the garde to dy,[\[151\]](#)15

Which ganyde them no pryde.

The Yngglishe men let thear bowys be,[\[152\]](#)

And pulde owt brandes that wer bright;[\[153\]](#)

It was a hevy syght to se

Bryght swordes on basnites[\[154\]](#) lyght.20

Thorowe ryche male, and myne-ye-ple[\[155\]](#)[\[156\]](#)

Many sterne[\[157\]](#) the stroke downe streght:[\[158\]](#)

Many a freyke,[\[159\]](#) that was full free,

[Pg 29] Ther undar foot dyd lyght.

At last the Duglas and the Persè met,25

Lyk to captayns of myght and mayne;[\[160\]](#)

The swapte[\[161\]](#) togethar tyll the both swat[\[162\]](#)

With swordes, that wear of fyn myllàn.[\[163\]](#)

Thes worthè freckys[\[164\]](#) for to fyght

Ther-to the wear full fayne,30

Tyll the bloode owte off thear basnetes sprete,[\[165\]](#)

As ever dyd heal or rayne.[\[166\]](#)

Holde the, Persè, sayd the Doglas,[\[167\]](#)

And i' feth I shall the brynge

Wher thowe shalte have a yerls wagis35

Of Jamy our Scottish kynge.

Thoue shalte have thy ransom fre,

I hight[\[168\]](#) the hear this thinge,

For the manfullyste man yet art thowe,

That ever I conqueryd in filde fightyng.40

Nay 'then' sayd the lord Persè,

I tolde it the beforne,

That I wolde never yeldyde be

To no man of a woman born.

With that ther cam an arrowe hastely45

Forthe off a mightie wane,[\[169\]](#)

Hit hathe strekene the yerle Douglas

In at the brest bane.

[Pg 30]

Thoroue lyvar and longs bathe[\[170\]](#)

The sharp arrowe ys gane,50

That never after in all his lyffe days,

He spayke mo wordes but ane,

That was,[\[171\]](#) Fyghte ye, my merry men, whyllys ye may,

For my lyff days ben gan.

The Persè leanyde on his brande,55

And sawe the Douglas de;

He tooke the dede man be the hande,

And sayd, Wo ys me for the!

To have savyde thy lyffe I wold have pertyd with

My landes for years thre,60

For a better man of hart, nare of hande

Was not in all the north countrè.

Off all that se a Skottishe knyght,

Was callyd Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry,

He sawe the Douglas to the deth was dyght[\[172\]](#);65

He spendyd[\[173\]](#) a spear a trusti tre:

He rod uppon a corsiare[\[174\]](#)

Throughe a hondrith archery;

He never styntyde, nar never blane,[\[175\]](#)

Tyll he came to the good lord Persè.70

He set uppone the lord Persè

A dynte,[\[176\]](#) that was full soare;

With a suar spear of a myghtè tre

Clean thorow the body he the Persè bore,[\[177\]](#)

[Pg 31]

Athe tothar syde, that a man myght se,75

A large cloth yard and mare:

Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Christiantè,

Then that day slain wear ther.

An archar off Northomberlonde

Say sleane was the lord Persè,[\[178\]](#)80

He bar a bende-bow in his hande,

Was made off trusti tre:

An arow, that a cloth yarde was lang,

To th' hard stele halyde he;[\[179\]](#)
A dynt, that was both sad and soar,⁸⁵
He sat on Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry.

The dynt yt was both sad and sar,[\[180\]](#)[\[181\]](#)
That he of Mongon-byrry sete;
The swane-fethars, that his arrowe bar,
With his hart blood the wear wete.[\[182\]](#)⁹⁰

Ther was never a freake wone foot wolde fle,
But still in stour[\[183\]](#) dyd stand,
Heawyng on yche othar,[\[184\]](#) whyll the myght dre,[\[185\]](#)
With many a bal-ful brande.

This battell begane in Chyviat⁹⁵
An owar befor the none,
And when even-song bell was rang
The battell was nat half done.

The tooke 'on' on ethar hand
Be the lyght off the mone;¹⁰⁰
Many hade no strenght for to stande,
[Pg 32] In Chyviat the hyllys aboun.[\[186\]](#)[\[187\]](#)

Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
Went away but fifti and thre;
Of twenty hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde,¹⁰⁵
But even five and fifti:

But all wear slayne Cheviat within:
The hade no strengthe to stand on hie;[\[188\]](#)
The chylde may rue that ys un-borne,
It was the mor pittè.¹¹⁰

Thear was slayne with the lord Persè
Sir John of Agerstone,
Sir Roger the hinde[\[189\]](#) Hartly,
Sir Wylyyam the bolde Hearone.

Sir Jorg the worthè Lovele[\[190\]](#)[\[191\]](#)¹¹⁵
A knyght of great renowen,
Sir Raff the ryche Rugbè
With dyntes wear beaten dowene.

For Wetharryngton my harte was wo,
That ever he slayne shulde be;¹²⁰
For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,[\[192\]](#)
Yet he knyled and fought on hys kne.[\[193\]](#)

Ther was slayne with the dougheti Douglas

Sir Hewe the Mongon-byrry,

Sir Davye Lwdale, that worthè was,125

His sistars son was he:

Sir Charles a Murrè, in that place,

That never a foot wolde fle;

Sir Hewe Maxwell, a lorde he was,

[Pg 33] With the Duglas dyd he dey.130

So on the morrowe the mayde them byears

Off byrch, and hasell so 'gray';[\[194\]](#)

Many wedous[\[195\]](#) with wepyng tears,[\[196\]](#)

Cam to fach ther makys[\[197\]](#) a-way.

Tivydale may carpe[\[198\]](#) off care,135

Northombarlond may mayk grat mone,[\[199\]](#)

For towe such captayns, as slayne wear thear,

On the march perti[\[200\]](#) shall never be none.[\[201\]](#)

Word ys comen to Edden-burrowe,

To Jamy the Skottishe kyng,140

That dougheti Duglas, lyff-tenant of the Merches,

He lay sleane Chyviot with-in.

His handdes dyd he weal[\[202\]](#) and wryng,

He sayd, Alas, and woe ys me!

Such another captayn Skotland within,145

He sayd, y-feth shuld never be.[\[203\]](#)

Worde ys commyn to lovly Londone

Till[\[204\]](#) the fourth Harry our kyng,[\[205\]](#)

That lord Persè, leyff-tennante of the Merchis,[\[206\]](#)

[Pg 34] He lay slayne Chyviat within.150

God have merci on his soll, sayd kyng Harry,

Good lord, yf thy will it be!

I have a hondrith captayns in Ynglonde, he sayd,

As good as ever was hee:

But Persè, and I brook[\[207\]](#) my lyffe,155

Thy deth well quyte[\[208\]](#) shall be.

As our noble kyng made his a-vowe,

Lyke a noble prince of renowen,

For the deth of the lord Persè,

He dyd the battel of Hombyll-down:160

Wher syx and thritte Skottish knyghtes

On a day wear beaten down:

Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght,

Over castill, towar, and town.

This was the hontyng off the Cheviat;165

That tear begane this spurn:[209]

Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe,

Call it the Battell of Otterburn.

At Otterburn began this spurne

Uppon a monnyn day:[210]170

Ther was the dougghté Doglas sleane,

The Persè never went away.

Ther was never a tym on the march partes

Sen the Doglas and the Persè met,

But yt was marvele, and the redde blude ronne not,

As the reane doys in the stret.176

[Pg 35]

Jhesue Christ our balys bete,[211]

And to the blys us brynge!

Thus was the hountyng of the Chevyat:

God send us all good ending!180

✱ The style of this and the following ballad is uncommonly rugged and uncouth, owing to their being writ in the very coarsest and broadest northern dialect.

The battle of Hombyll-down, or Humbledon, was fought Sept. 14, 1402 (anno 3 Hen. IV.), wherein the English, under the command of the Earl of Northumberland and his son Hotspur, gained a complete victory over the Scots. The village of *Humbledon* is one mile northwest from Wooler, in Northumberland. The battle was fought in the field below the village, near the present Turnpike Road, in a spot called ever since *Red-Riggs*. Humbledon is in *Glendale Ward*, a district so named in this county, and mentioned above in ver. 163.

II.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE.



The only battle wherein an Earl of Douglas was slain fighting with a Percy was that of Otterbourne, which is the subject of this ballad. It is here related with the allowable partiality of an English poet, and much in the same manner as it is recorded in the English Chronicles. The Scottish writers have, with a partiality at least as excusable, related it no less in their own favour. Luckily we have a very circumstantial narrative of the whole affair from Froissart, a French historian, who appears to be unbiassed. Froissart's relation is prolix; I shall therefore give it, with a few corrections, as abridged by

Carte, who has, however, had recourse to other authorities, and differs from Froissart in some things, which I shall note in the margin.

In the twelfth year of Richard II., 1388, "The Scots taking advantage of the confusions of this nation, and falling with a party into the West-marches, ravaged the country about Carlisle, and [Pg 36]carried off 300 prisoners. It was with a much greater force, headed by some of the principal nobility, that, in the beginning of August, [212] they invaded Northumberland; and, having wasted part of the county of Durham, [213] advanced to the gates of Newcastle; where, in a skirmish, they took a 'penon' or colours [214] belonging to Henry lord Percy, surnamed Hotspur, son to the Earl of Northumberland. In their retreat home, they attacked a castle near Otterbourn: and, in the evening of Aug. 9 (as the English writers say, or rather, according to Froissart, Aug. 15), after an unsuccessful assault were surprised in their camp, which was very strong, by Henry, who at the first onset put them into a good deal of confusion. But James Earl of Douglas rallying his men, there ensued one of the best-fought actions that happened in that age; both armies showing the utmost bravery: [215] the earl Douglas himself being slain on the spot; [216] the Earl of Murrey mortally wounded; and Hotspur, [217] with his brother Ralph Percy, taken prisoners. These disasters on both sides have given occasion to the event of the engagement's being disputed. Froissart (who derives his relation from a Scotch knight, two gentlemen of the same country, and as many of Foix) [218] affirming that the Scots [Pg 37]remained masters of the field; and the English writers insinuating the contrary. These last maintain that the English had the better of the day: but night coming on, some of the northern lords, coming with the Bishop of Durham to their assistance, killed many of them by mistake, supposing them to be Scots; and the Earl of Dunbar, at the same time falling on another side upon Hotspur, took him and his brother prisoners, and carried them off while both parties were fighting. It is at least certain, that immediately after this battle the Scots engaged in it made the best of their way home: and the same party was taken by the other corps about Carlisle."

Such is the account collected by Carte, in which he seems not to be free from partiality: for prejudice must own that Froissart's circumstantial account carries a great appearance of truth, and he gives the victory to the Scots. He, however, does justice to the courage of both parties; and represents their mutual generosity in such a light, that the present age might edify by the example. "The Englyshmen on the one partye, and Scottes on the other party, are good men of warre, for whan they mete, there is a hard fighte without sparynge. There is no hoo [219] betwene them as long as speares, swordes, axes, or daggers wyll endure; but lay on eche upon other: and whan they be well beaten, and that the one party hath obtayned the victory, they than glorifye so in their dedes of armes, and are so joyfull, that suche as be taken, they shall be ransomed or they go out of the felde; [220] so that shortely *eche of them is so contente with other, that at their departyng curtoysly they will saye, God thanke you.* But in fyghtyng one with another there is no playe, nor sparyng." *Froissart's Chronicle* (as translated by Sir Johan Bouchier Lord Berners), cap. cxlii.

The following Ballad is (in this present edition) printed from an old MS. in the Cotton Library [221] (*Cleopatra*, c. iv.), and contains many stanzas more than were in the former copy, which was transcribed from a MS. in the Harleian Collection [No. 293, fol. 52.] In the Cotton MS. this poem has no title, but in the Harleian copy it is thus inscribed, *A songe made in R. 2. his tyme of the battele of Otterburne, betweene Lord Henry Percy earle of Northomberlande and the earle Douglas of Scotlande*, Anno 1388.

[Pg 38]

But this title is erroneous, and added by some ignorant transcriber of after-times: for, 1. The battle was not fought by the Earl of Northumberland, who was absent, but by his son, *Sir Henry Percy*, Knt., surnamed *Hotspur* (in those times they did not usually give the title of *Lord* to an Earl's eldest son). 2. Altho' the battle was fought in Richard II.'s time, the song is evidently of later date, as appears from the poet's quoting the chronicles in *Pt. II.*, ver. 26; and speaking of Percy in the last stanza as dead. It was, however, written in all likelihood as early as the foregoing song, if not earlier. This, perhaps,

may be inferred from the minute circumstances with which the story is related, many of which are recorded in no chronicle, and were probably preserved in the memory of old people. It will be observed that the authors of these two poems have some lines in common; but which of them was the original proprietor must depend upon their priority; and this the sagacity of the reader must determine.

[We have here a ballad founded upon a true historical event, in which the writer attempts to be as truthful as his national bias will allow him. In Chevy Chase, Percy is the aggressor, but in the "Battle of Otterburn," Douglas commences the encounter by his action. At the period under notice the king of England (Richard II.) was occupied in dissension with his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Parliament, while Robert II., King of Scotland, was very old, and his eldest son lame and inactive, so that the Border chieftains were pretty much left to their own devices. The Earl of Fife, a younger son of King Robert, and certain of the great nobles, arranged among themselves that an inroad should be made into England as a reprisal for the injuries the Scotch had at various times sustained from the English, and the expedition was placed under the command of James, Earl of Douglas.

Besides the ballad we are now considering there are metrical accounts of the battle in John Hardyng's *Chronicle*, Joannes de Fordun's *Scoti-Chronicon*, and Wyntoun's *Orygynal Cronykil of Scotland*. In 1857, Robert White published an interesting *History of the Battle of Otterburn, fought in 1388, with Memoirs of the Warriors who engaged in that memorable conflict*. This book is written in an enthusiastic spirit by one who was born and bred on the Borders, and who kept alive in his soul the true old Border spirit. He listened on his mother's knee to the stanzas of the modern ballad of *Chevy Chase*, which she chanted to him, and he grew up with a feeling which he retained through life, that Percy and Douglas were far greater men than Napoleon and Wellington.

The exact date of the battle is an open question, for the[Pg 39] authorities disagree as to this particular; thus Buchanan fixes it on July 21st, and other writers name, respectively, August 5th, 9th, 10th, 15th, and 19th. White thinks that the battle was fought on the evening of Wednesday and morning of Thursday, 19th and 20th of August, immediately before the full moon. In the year 1388 the new moon fell on the 6th of August, and Douglas is not likely to have chosen a period of dark evenings for his expedition. Another disputed point is the number of men in the Scottish army, under Douglas. Froissart gives the numbers at three or four hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand infantry; Wyntoun, at near seven thousand men; Buchanan, at three hundred horse and two thousand foot, besides servants and attendants; Godscroft, at four thousand horsemen; Ridpath, at three thousand men; and Scott, at three hundred men-at-arms, who, with their followers, made up from a thousand to fifteen hundred men, with two thousand chosen infantry. White makes the following statement as the result of his sifting of the conflicting accounts:—

Men-at-arms	400
Attendants on ditto, footmen, lackeys, and grooms	1,200
Infantry mounted	2,000
Attendants on ditto, boys to take care of horses, sutlers, &c.	3,000
	6,600

It has been supposed that the first part of this ballad down to verse 112 was originally of Scottish manufacture, for two reasons: 1st, because Hume, of Godscroft, refers to "a Scots song," which begins as this does; and 2nd, because haymaking has been over at least a month in England at Lammas, when Scotch husbandmen are still busy "winning their hay." This last reason, however, cannot be considered a very conclusive one, as the seasons must be much alike on the two sides of the Border. The second part is written from a thoroughly English stand-point. The two Scottish versions, viz. the one given by Scott in his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and the one in *Herd's Collection*, are very different from the



Yt felle abowght the Lamasse tyde,
Whan husbonds wynn ther haye,[\[222\]](#)
The dowghtye Dowglasse bowynd[\[223\]](#) hym to ryde,
In Ynglond to take a praye:

The yerlle[\[224\]](#) of Fyffe,[\[225\]](#) withowghten stryffe,⁵
He bowynd hym over Sulway:[\[226\]](#)
The grete wolde ever together ryde;
That race they may rue for aye.

Over 'Ottercap' hyll they[\[227\]](#) came in,
And so dowyn by Rodelyffe cragge,¹⁰
Upon Grene 'Leyton' they lyghted dowyn,
Styrande[\[228\]](#) many a stagge:[\[229\]](#)
[Pg 41]

And boldely brente[\[230\]](#) Northomberlonde,
And haryed[\[231\]](#) many a towyn;
They dyd owr Ynglyssh men grete wrange,[\[232\]](#)¹⁵
To battell that were not bowyn.[\[233\]](#)

Than spake a berne[\[234\]](#) upon the bent,[\[235\]](#)
Of comforte that was not colde,
And sayd, We have brent Northomberlond,
We have all welth in holde.²⁰

Now we have haryed all Bamboroweshyre,
All the welth in the worlde have wee;
I rede[\[236\]](#) we ryde to Newe Castell,
So styll and stalwurthlye.[\[237\]](#)

Uppon the morowe, when it was daye,²⁵
The standards schone fulle bryght;
To the Newe Castelle the toke the waye,
And thether they cam fulle ryght.

Sir Henry Percy laye at the Newe Castelle,
I telle yow withowtten drede;³⁰
He had byn a march-man[\[238\]](#) all hys dayes,
And kepte Barwyke upon Twede.

To the Newe Castell when they cam,
The Skottes they cryde on hyght,[\[239\]](#)
Syr Harye Percy, and thow byste[\[240\]](#) within,35
Com to the fylde, and fyght:

For we have brente Northomberlonde,
Thy eritage good and ryght;
And syne my logeyng I have take,[\[241\]](#)
With my brande dubbyd many a knyght.40
[Pg 42]

Sir Harry Percy cam to the walles,
The Skottyssh oste for to se;
"And thow hast brente Northomberlond,
Full sore it rewyth[\[242\]](#) me.

Yf thou hast haryed all Bambarowe shyre,45
Thow hast done me grete envye;[\[243\]](#)
For the trespasse thow hast me done,
The tone[\[244\]](#) of us schall dye."

Where schall I byde the, sayd the Dowglas?
Or where wylte thow come to me?50
"At Otterborne in the hygh way,[\[245\]](#)
Ther maist thow well logeed be.

The roo[\[246\]](#) full rekeles ther sche rinnes,[\[247\]](#)
To make the game and glee:
The fawkon and the fesaunt[\[248\]](#) both,55
Amonge the holtes on 'hee.'[\[249\]](#)[\[250\]](#)

Ther maist thow have thy welth at wyll,
Well looged ther maist be.
Yt schall not be long, or I com the tyll,"[\[251\]](#)
Sayd Syr Harry Percye.60

Ther schall I byde the, sayd the Dowglas,
By the fayth of my bodye.
Thether schall I com, sayd Syr Harry Percy;
My trowth I plyght to the.
[Pg 43]

A pype of wyne he gave them over the walles,65
For soth, as I yow saye:
Ther he mayd the Douglas drynke,
And all hys oste that daye.

The Dowglas turnyd him homewarde agayne,

For soth[\[252\]](#) withowghten naye,70

He tooke his logeyng at Oterborne

Uppon a Wedyns-day:

And ther he pyght[\[253\]](#) hys standerd dowyn,

Hys gettyng[\[254\]](#) more and lesse,

And syne[\[255\]](#) he warned hys men to goo75

To chose ther geldyngs gresse.

A Skottysshe knyght hoved[\[256\]](#) upon the bent,[\[257\]](#)

A wache[\[258\]](#) I dare well saye:

So was he ware[\[259\]](#) on the noble Percy

In the dawyng of the daye.80

He prycked[\[260\]](#) to his pavyleon dore,

As faste as he myght ronne,

Awaken, Dowglas, cryed the knyght,

For hys love, that syttes yn trone.[\[261\]](#)

Awaken, Dowglas, cryed the knyght,85

For thow maiste waken wyth wyne:[\[262\]](#)

Yender have I spyed the prowde Percy,

And seven standardes wyth hym.

Nay by my trowth, the Douglas sayed,

It ys but a fayned taylle:90

He durste not loke on my bred[\[263\]](#) banner,

For all Ynglonde so haylle.[\[264\]](#)

[Pg 44]

Was I not yesterdaye at the Newe Castell,

That stonds so fayre on Tyne?

For all the men the Percy hade,95

He cowde not garre[\[265\]](#) me ones to dyne.

He stepped owt at hys pavelyon dore,

To loke and it were lesse;

Arraye yow, lordyngs, one and all,

For here bygynnes no peysse.[\[266\]](#)100

The yerle of Mentaye,[\[267\]](#) thow arte my eme,[\[268\]](#)

The forwarde[\[269\]](#) I gyve to the:

The yerlle of Huntlay cawte[\[270\]](#) and kene,

He schall wyth the be.

The lorde of Bowghan[\[271\]](#) in armure bryght105

On the other hand he schall be:

Lorde Jhonstone, and lorde Maxwell,

They to schall be with me.

Swynton fayre fylde upon your pryde
To batell make yow bowen:[\[272\]](#)110
Syr Davy Scotte, Syr Walter Stewarde,
Syr Jhon of Agurstone.

A FYTTE.



The Perssy came byfore hys oste,[\[273\]](#)
Wych was ever a gentyll knyght,
Upon the Dowglas lowde can he crye,
I wyll holde that I have hyght:[\[274\]](#)[\[275\]](#)
[Pg 45]

For thow haste brente Northumberlonde.5
And done me grete envye;
For thys trespasse thou hast me done,
The tone of us schall dye.

The Dowglas answerde hym agayne
With grete wurdz up on 'hee,'[\[276\]](#)10
And sayd, I have twenty agaynst 'thy' one,[\[277\]](#)[\[278\]](#)
Byholde and thow maiste see.

Wyth that the Percye was grevyd sore,
For sothe as I yow saye:
[\[279\]](#)He lyghted dowyn upon his fote,15
And schoote[\[280\]](#) his horsse clene away.

Every man sawe that he dyd soo,
That ryall[\[281\]](#) was ever in rowght;[\[282\]](#)
Every man schoote hys horsse him froo,
And lyght hym rowynde abowght.20

Thus Syr Hary Percye toke the fylde,
For soth, as I yow saye:
Jesu Cryste in hevyn on hyght
Dyd helpe hym well that daye.

But nyne thowzand, ther was no moo;25
The cronykle wyll not layne:[\[283\]](#)
Forty thowsande Skottes and fowre
That day fowght them agayne.

But when the batell byganne to joyne,

In hast ther came a knyght,30

'Then' letters fayre furth hath he tayne

[Pg 46] And thus he sayd full ryght:

My lorde, your father he gretes yow well,

Wyth many a noble knyght;

He desyres yow to byde

That he may see thys fyght.

The Baron of Grastoke ys com owt of the west,

Wyth hym a noble companye;

All they loge at your fathers thys nyght,

And the Battel fayne wold they see.40

For Jesu's love, sayd Syr Harye Percy,

That dyed for yow and me,

Wende to my lorde my Father agayne,

And saye thow saw me not with yee:[284]

My trowth ys plyght to yonne Skottysch knyght,45

It nedes me not to layne,[285]

That I schulde byde hym upon thys bent,

And I have hys trowth agayne:

And if that I wende off thys grownde

For soth unfoughten awaye,50

He wolde me call but a kowarde knyght

In hys londe another daye.

Yet had I lever[286] to be rynde[287] and rente,

By Mary that mykel maye:[288]

Then ever my manhod schulde be reprovyd55

Wyth a Skotte another daye.

Wherfore schote, archars, for my sake,

And let scharpe arowes flee:

Mynstrells, playe up for your waryson,[289]

And well quyt it schall be.60

[Pg 47]

Every man thynke on hys trewe love,

And marke hym to the Trenite:[290]

For to God I make myne avowe

Thys day wyll I not fle.

The blodye Harte in the Dowglas armes,65

Hys standerde stode on hye;

That every man myght full well knowe:

By syde stode Starres thre.

The whyte Lyon on the Ynglysh parte,

Forsoth as I yow sayne;[\[291\]](#)70

The Lucetts and the Cressawnts both:

The Skotts faught them agayne.[\[292\]](#)

Uppon sent Andrewe lowde cane they crye,

And thrysse they schowte on hyght,

And syne marked them one owr Ynglysshe men,75

As I have tolde yow ryght.

Sent George the bryght owr ladyes knyght,

To name they[\[293\]](#) were full fayne,

Owr Ynglysshe men they cryde on hyght,

And thrysse the schowtte agayne.80

Wyth that scharpe arowes bygan to flee,

I tell yow in sertayne;

Men of armes byganne to joyne;

Many a dowghty man was ther slayne.

[Pg 48]

The Percy and the Dowglas mette,85

That ether of other was fayne;

They schapped[\[294\]](#) together, whyll that the swette,

With swords of fyne Collayne;[\[295\]](#)

Tyll the bloode from ther bassonetts[\[296\]](#) ranne,

As the roke[\[297\]](#) doth in the rayne.90

Yelde the to me, sayd the Dowglàs,

Or ells thow schalt be slayne:

For I see, by thy bryght bassonet,

Thow arte sum man of myght;

And so I do by thy burnysshed brande,[\[298\]](#)95

Thow art an yerle, or ells a knyght.[\[299\]](#)

By my good faythe, sayd the noble Percy,

Now haste thou rede[\[300\]](#) full ryght,

Yet wyll I never yelde me to the,

Whyll I may stonde and fyght.100

They swapped together, whyll that they swette,

Wyth swordes scharpe and long;

Ych on other so faste they beette,

Tyll ther helmes cam in peyses dowyn.

The Percy was a man of strength,105

I tell yow in thys stounde,[\[301\]](#)

He smote the Dowglas at the swordes length,

That he felle to the growynde.

The sworde was scharpe and sore can byte,

I tell yow in sertayne;110

To the harte, he cowde hym smyte,

Thus was the Dowglas slayne.

[Pg 49]

The stonderds stode styll on eke syde,

With many a grevous grone;

Ther the fowght the day, and all the nyght,115

And many a dowghty man was 'slone.'[\[302\]](#)

Ther was no freke,[\[303\]](#) that ther wolde flye,

But styffly in stowre[\[304\]](#) can stond,

Ychone[\[305\]](#) hewyng on other whyll they myght drye,[\[306\]](#)

Wyth many a bayllefull bronde.120

Ther was slayne upon the Skottes syde,

For soth and sertenly,

Syr James a Dowglas ther was slayne,

That daye that he cowde dye.[\[307\]](#)

The yerlle Mentaye of he was slayne,125

Grysely[\[308\]](#) groned uppon the growynd;

Syr Davy Scotte, Syr Walter Steward,

Syr 'John' of Agurstonne.[\[309\]](#)

Syr Charles Morrey in that place,

That never a fote wold flye;130

Sir Hughe Maxwell, a lorde he was,

With the Dowglas dyd he dye.

Ther was slayne upon the Skottes syde,

For soth[\[310\]](#) as I yow saye,

Of fowre and forty thowsande Scotts135

Went but eyghtene awaye.

[Pg 50]

Ther was slayne upon the Ynglysshe syde,

For soth and sertenlye,

A gentell knyght, Sir John Fitz-hughe,

Yt was the more petye.140

Syr James Harebotell ther was slayne,

For hym ther hartes were sore,
The gentyll 'Lovelie' ther was slayne,[\[311\]](#)
That the Percyes standerd bore.

Ther was slayne uppon the Ynglyssh perte,145
For soth as I yow saye;
Of nyne thowsand Ynglyssh men
Fyve hondert cam awaye:

The other were slayne in the fylde,
Cryste kepe ther sowles from wo,150
Seyng ther was so fewe fryndes
Agaynst so many a foo.

Then one the morne they mayd them beeres[\[312\]](#)
Of byrch, and haysell graye;
Many a wydowe with wepyng teyres155
Ther makes[\[313\]](#) they fette[\[314\]](#) awaye.

Thys fraye bygan at Otterborne,
Bytwene the nyghte and the day:
Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyfe,
And the Percy was lede awaye.[\[315\]](#)160

Then was ther a Scottyshe prisoner tayne,
Syr Hughe Montgomery was hys name,
For soth as I yow saye,
[Pg 51] He borrowed the Percy home agayne.[\[316\]](#)

Now let us all for the Percy praye[\[317\]](#)165
To Jesu most of myght,
To bryng hys sowle to the blysse of heven,
For he was a gentyll knyght.



* Most of the names in the two preceding ballads are found to have belonged to families of distinction in the North, as may be made appear from authentic records. Thus in

THE ANCIENT BALLAD OF CHEVY CHASE.



[Second Fit, ver. 112. *Agerstone*.] The family of *Haggerston* of *Haggerston*, near Berwick, has been seated there for many centuries, and still remains. *Thomas Haggerston* was among the commissioners returned for Northumberland in 12 Hen. 6, 1433. (Fuller's *Worthies*, p. 310.) The head of this family at present is *Sir Thomas Haggerston*, Bart., of *Haggerston* above-mentioned.

N.B. The name is spelt *Agerstone*, as in the text, in Leland's *Itinerary*, vol. vii. p. 54.[\[318\]](#)

[Ver. 113. *Hartly*.] *Hartley* is a village near the sea in the barony of Tinemouth, about 7 m. from North-Shields. It probably gave name to a family of note at that time.

[Ver. 114. *Hearone*.] This family, one of the most ancient, was long of great consideration in Northumberland. *Haddeston*, the Caput Baroniae of *Heron*, was their ancient residence. It descended [Pg 52]25 Edw. I. to the heir general *Emiline Heron*, afterwards Baroness *Darcy*.—*Ford*, &c., and *Bockenfield* (in com. eodem) went at the same time to *Roger Heron*, the heir male; whose descendants were summoned to Parliament: *Sir William Heron* of Ford Castle being summoned 44 Edw. III.—Ford Castle hath descended by heirs general to the family of Delaval (mentioned in the next article).—*Robert Heron*, Esq., who died at Newark in 1753, (father of the Right Hon. *Sir Richard Heron*, Bart.) was heir male of the *Hérons* of Bockenfield, a younger branch of this family.—*Sir Thomas Heron Middleton*, Bart., is heir male of the *Hérons* of Chip-Chase, another branch of the *Hérons* of Ford Castle.

[Ver. 115. *Lovele*.] *Joh. de Lavale*, miles, was sheriff of Northumberland 34 Hen. VIII. *Joh. de Lavele*, mil. in the 1 Edw. VI. and afterwards. (Fuller, 313.) In Nicholson this name is spelt *Da Lovel*, p. 304. This seems to be the ancient family of *Delaval*, of *Seaton Delaval*, in Northumberland, whose ancestor was one of the 25 *Barons* appointed to be guardians of *Magna Charta*.[\[319\]](#)

[Ver. 117. *Rugbè*.] The ancient family of *Rokeby*, in Yorkshire, seems to be here intended. In Thoresby's *Ducat. Leod.*, p. 253, fol., is a genealogy of this house, by which it appears that the head of the family, about the time when this ballad was written, was *Sir Ralph Rokeby*, Knt., *Ralph* being a common name of the *Rokebys*.[\[320\]](#)

[Ver. 119. *Wetharrington*.] *Rog. de Widrington* was sheriff of Northumberland in 36 of Edw. III. (Fuller, p. 311.)—*Joh. de Widrington* in 11 of Hen. IV. and many others of the same name afterwards.—See also Nicholson, p. 331.—Of this family was the late Lord Witherington.

[Ver. 124. *Mongonberry*.] *Sir Hugh Montgomery* was son of *John* Lord *Montgomery*, the lineal ancestor of the present Earl of Eglington.

[Ver. 125. *Lwdale*.] The ancient family of the *Liddels* were originally from Scotland, where they were lords of *Liddel Castle*, and of the Barony of *Buff*. (Vid. Collins's *Peerage*.) The head of this family is the present Lord Ravensworth, of Ravensworth Castle, in the county of Durham.[\[321\]](#)

[Pg 53]

IN THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE.

[Ver. 101. *Mentaye*.] At the time of this battle the Earldom of *Menteith* was possessed by *Robert Stewart*, Earl of Fife, third son of K. Robert II., who, according to Buchanan, commanded the Scots that entered by Carlisle. But our minstrel had probably an eye to the family of *Graham*, who had this earldom when the ballad was written. See Douglas's *Peerage of Scotland*, 1764, fol.

[Ver. 103. *Huntleye*.] This shews this ballad was not composed before 1449; for in that year Alexander Lord of Gordon

and Huntley, was created Earl of *Huntley*, by K. James II.

[Ver. 105. *Bowghan*.] The Earl of *Buchan* at that time was *Alexander Stewart*, fourth son of K. Robert II.

[Ver. 107. *Jhonstone—Maxwell*.] These two families of *Johnstone* Lord of *Johnston*, and *Maxwell* Lord of *Maxwell*, were always very powerful on the borders. Of the former family was *Johnston* Marquis of Annandale: of the latter was *Maxwell* Earl of Nithsdale. I cannot find that any chief of this family was named Sir *Hugh*; but Sir *Herbert Maxwell* was about this time much distinguished. (See Doug.) This might have been originally written Sir *H. Maxwell*, and by transcribers converted into Sir *Hugh*. So above, in No. I. v. 90. *Richard* is contracted into *Ric*.

[Ver. 109. *Swintone*.] *i. e.* The Laird of *Swintone*; a small village within the Scottish border, 3 miles from Norham. This family still subsists, and is very ancient.

[Ver. 111. *Scotte*.] The illustrious family of *Scot*, ancestors of the Duke of Buccleugh, always made a great figure on the borders. Sir *Walter Scot* was at the head of this family when the battle was fought; but his great-grandson, Sir *David Scot*, was the hero of that house when the ballad was written.

[Ibid. *Stewarde*.] The person here designed was probably Sir *Walter Stewart*, Lord of Dalswinton and Gairlies, who was eminent at that time. (See Doug.) From him is descended the present Earl of Galloway.

[Ver. 112. *Agurstonne*.] The seat of this family was sometimes subject to the kings of Scotland. Thus *Richardus Haggerstoun, miles*, is one of the Scottish knights who signed a treaty with the English in 1249, temp. Hen. III. (Nicholson, p. 2, note).—It was the fate of many parts of Northumberland often to change their masters, according as the Scottish or English arms prevailed.

[Pg 54]

[Ver. 129. *Murrey*.] The person here meant was probably Sir *Charles Murray* of Cockpoole, who flourished at that time, and was ancestor of the *Murrays* sometime Earls of Annandale. See Doug. *Peerage*.

[Ver. 139. *Fitz-hughe*.] Dugdale (in his *Baron*. v. i. p. 403) informs us that *John*, son of Henry Lord *Fitzhugh*, was killed at the battle of Otterbourne. This was a Northumberland family. Vid. Dugd. p. 403, col. 1, and Nicholson, pp. 33, 60.

[Ver. 141. *Harbotle*.] *Harbottle* is a village upon the river Coquet, about 10 m. west of Rothbury. The family of *Harbottle* was once considerable in Northumberland. (See Fuller, pp. 312, 313.) A daughter of *Guischard Harbottle*, Esq., married Sir *Thomas Percy*, Knt., son of *Henry* the fifth,—and father of *Thomas* seventh, Earls of Northumberland.

III. THE JEW'S DAUGHTER,

A Scottish Ballad,



Is founded upon the supposed practice of the Jews in crucifying or otherwise murdering Christian children, out of hatred to the religion of their parents: a practice which has been always alledged in excuse for the cruelties exercised upon that wretched people, but which probably never happened in a single instance. For, if we consider, on the one hand, the ignorance and superstition of the times when such stories took their rise, the virulent prejudices of the monks who record

them, and the eagerness with which they would be caught up by the barbarous populace as a pretence for plunder; on the other hand, the great danger incurred by the perpetrators, and the inadequate motives they could have to excite them to a crime of so much horror; we may reasonably conclude the whole charge to be groundless and malicious.

The following ballad is probably built upon some Italian legend, and bears a great resemblance to the Prioress's Tale in Chaucer: the poet seems also to have had an eye to the known story of *Hugh of Lincoln*, a child said to have been there murdered by the Jews in the reign of Henry III. The conclusion of this ballad appears to be wanting: what it probably contained may be seen[Pg 55] in Chaucer. As for *Mirry-land Toun*, it is probably a corruption of *Milan* (called by the Dutch *Meylandt*) *Town*: the *Pa* is evidently the river *Po*; although the Adige, not the Po, runs through Milan.

Printed from a MS. copy sent from Scotland.

[This ballad, which is also known under the title of *Sir Hugh of Lincoln*, was at one time so widely popular that it is preserved in six different versions, besides fragments, and has originated a literature of its own. Mons. Francisque Michel discovered a Norman-French version in the Royal Library at Paris, which is supposed to date back to the period when the murder of Sir Hugh was to have been committed. This was first published in the year 1834 under the title, "Hugues de Lincoln: Recueil de Ballades Anglo-Normande et Ecossoises relatives au meurtre de cet enfant commis par les Juifs en MCCLV." The Rev. Dr. A. Hume communicated a very full paper on the subject of the tradition to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, on November 13, 1848, which is published in the Proceedings (No. 5), and Mr. J. O. Halliwell printed, in 1849, a small volume containing "Ballads and Poems respecting Hugh of Lincoln." In the *Athenæum* for Dec. 15, 1849, there is a condemnatory review of Dr. Hume's work, to which the reviewer has added some valuable information of his own. Percy's remark that *Mirry-land town* is a corruption of Milan town, and *Pa* of the river Po, seems far-fetched, as there is no reason for supposing that the ballad was in any way connected with Italy. Jamieson's version reads *Merry Lincoln*, and in Motherwell's the scene is changed to Maitland town. In some parts of England the ballad has degenerated into a sort of nursery rhyme, the Northamptonshire version reading "Merry Scotland," and the Shropshire one, "Merry-cock land." Mr. J. H. Dixon suggests *mere-land town*, from the mere or fen lakes, and reads wa' for Pa'. (*Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series, vol. ix. p. 30, note.)

Miss Agnes Strickland communicated the following lines obtained from oral tradition at Godalming, in Surrey, to Mr. Halliwell, who printed them in his tract:—

"He toss'd the ball so high, so high,
He toss'd the ball so low;
He toss'd the ball in the Jew's garden,
And the Jews were all below.
"Oh! then out came the Jew's daughter,
She was dressèd all in green:
'Come hither, come hither, my sweet pretty fellow,
And fetch your ball again.'"

[Pg 56]

The tradition upon which this ballad is founded—that the Jews use human blood in their preparation for the Passover, and are in the habit of kidnapping and butchering Christian children for the purpose—is very widely spread and of great antiquity. Eisenmenger[\[322\]](#) refers to a case which occurred at Inmestar, in Syria, so early as the year 419, but the earliest case recorded as having occurred in Europe is that of William of Norwich, in 1137. The following is a translation from a

passage in the *Peterborough Chronicle* (which ends with the death of Stephen and the accession of Henry the Second), relating to this remarkable superstition:—"Now we will say something of what happened in King Stephen's time. In his time the Jews of Norwich bought a Christian child before Easter, and tortured him with all the same torturing that our Lord was tortured. And on Good Friday (lang fridæi) they hanged him on a cross, for our Lord's love; and afterwards buried him. They thought (wenden) that it should be concealed, but our Lord showed that he was a holy martyr (m̃r), and the monks took him and buried him solemnly in the monastery (minst). And he maketh through our Lord wonderful and manifold miracles. And he was called Saint William." Mr. Earle, in his note to this passage, [\[323\]](#) says that "S. William seems to have retained his celebrity down to the time of the Reformation, at least in Norfolk. In Loddon church, which is advanced perpendicular of about 1500, there is a painting of his crucifixion on a panel of the rood-screen, still in fair preservation."

St. William's fame, however, was eclipsed in other parts of England by that of Sir Hugh of Lincoln, whose death was celebrated by historians and poets. Henry III. being often in want of money, was glad to take any opportunity of extorting it from the unfortunate Jews, and in 1255 his exchequer particularly required replenishing on account of the expected arrival in England of his son Edward's newly married wife, Eleanor of Castile. In this year a young boy was murdered, and, opportunely for the king, the crime was charged to the Jews. It was asserted that the child had been stolen, fattened on bread and milk for ten days, and crucified with all the cruelties and insults of Christ's passion, in the presence of all the Jews in England, who had been summoned to Lincoln for the purpose. The supposed criminals were brought to justice, and the king's commission for the trial, and the warrant to sell the goods of the several Jews who were found guilty, are still preserved. The Jew into whose house the child had gone to play, tempted by the promise of his life, made a full confession, and threw the guilt upon his brethren. Ninety-one Jews of Lin[Pg 57]coln were sent to London as accomplices, and thrown into dungeons. Eighteen of the richest were hanged on a gallows, and twenty more imprisoned in the Tower of London. The king was enriched by the spoils, and the clergy of Lincoln did not lose their opportunity, for the minster was made famous by the possession of the martyr's tomb. Dean Milman, in relating these circumstances, says: "Great part of the story refutes itself, but I have already admitted the possibility that among the ignorant and fanatic Jews there might be some who, exasperated by the constant repetition of the charge, might brood over it so long, as at length to be tempted to its perpetration." [\[324\]](#) Any such explanation as this, however, does not seem necessary, for the wide-spread existence of the superstition goes far to prove the entire falsehood at least of the later cases, and the story of Sir Hugh was but a revival of that of St. William. It is worth mentioning, in passing, that this calumny was in fact a recoil upon the Jews themselves of a weapon they had used against the Christians. As early as the third century they affirmed that Christians in celebrating their mysteries used to kill a child and eat its flesh. Pagans probably learnt the calumny from the Jews, and also charged the Christians with eating children.

The whole proceedings in the case of Sir Hugh are chronicled by Matthew Paris, who was in high favour with Henry III., and from his pages the account is transferred to the *Chronicles of Grafton*, *Fabyan*, and *Holinshed*. Chaucer most probably consulted the same source when he included the story in his *Canterbury Tales*, although he shifts the scene to Asia, and makes his Prioress say, when ending her tale with a reference to Sir Hugh:—

"O younge Hughe of Lyncoln; slayn also
With cursed Jewes (as it is notable,
For it nys *but a litel while ago*)."

Tyrwhitt, in his edition of Chaucer, notes that he found in the first four months of the *Acta Sanctorum* of Bollandus the names of five children canonized as having been murdered by the Jews, and he supposes that the remaining eight months would furnish at least as many more. Tyrwhitt accepts Percy's interpretation of Mirry-land as a corruption of the name of

Milan, and under this erroneous impression he suggests that the real occasion of the ballad may have been the murder of the boy Simon, at Trent, in 1475.[\[325\]](#)

[Pg 58]

The superstition upon which all these stories are founded is said still to prevail among the ignorant members of the Greek Church, and it was revived at Damascus in 1840 in consequence of the disappearance of a priest named Thomaso. Two or three Jews were put to death before a proper judicial examination could be made, and the popular fury was so excited that severe persecution extended through a large part of the Turkish empire. Sir Moses Montefiore visited the various localities with the object of obtaining redress for his people, and he was successful. On November 6, 1840, a firman for the protection of the Jews was given at Constantinople, which contained the following passage:—"An ancient prejudice prevailed against the Jews. The ignorant believed that the Jews were accustomed to sacrifice a human being, to make use of his blood at the Passover. In consequence of this opinion the Jews of Damascus and Rhodes, who are subjects of our empire, have been persecuted by other nations.... But a short time has elapsed since some Jews dwelling in the isle of Rhodes were brought from thence to Constantinople, where they had been tried and judged according to the new regulations, and their innocence of the accusations made against them fully proved." The calumny, however, was again raised in October, 1847, and the Jews were in imminent peril when the missing boy, who had been staying at Baalbec, reappeared in good health.

Within the last few years the Greek Patriarch at Constantinople has issued a pastoral letter, in which he points out the wickedness of the Christian persecution of the Jews. He says: "Superstition is a detestable thing. Almost all the Christian nations of the East have taken up the extravagant idea that the Israelites enjoy shedding Christian blood, either to obtain thereby a blessing from heaven, or to gratify their national rancour against Christ. Hence conflicts and disturbances break out, by which the social harmony between the dwellers in the same land, yea, the same fatherland, is disturbed. Thus a report was lately spread of the abduction of little Christian children in order to give a pretext for suspicion. We on our side abhor such lying fancies; we regard them as the superstitions of men of weak faith and narrow minds; and we disavow them officially."

[Pg 59]

The superstition, however, still lives on, and according to the *Levant Herald* (1874), the Mahometans are beginning to fall into the delusion that the sacrificial knife is applied by the Jews to young Turks as well as to young Christians.]



The rain rins down through Mirry-land toune,
Sae dois it doune the Pa:
Sae dois the lads of Mirry-land toune,
Quhan they play at the ba'.[\[326\]](#)

Than out and cam the Jewis dochtèr,⁵
Said, Will ye cum in and dine?
"I winnae cum in, I cannae cum in,
Without my play-feres[\[327\]](#) nine."

Scho[\[328\]](#) powd[\[329\]](#) an apple reid and white

To intice the yong thing in:10

Scho powd an apple white and reid,

And that the sweit bairne did win.

And scho has taine out a little pen-knife,

And low down by her gair,[\[330\]](#)

Scho has twin'd[\[331\]](#) the yong thing and his life;15

A word he nevir spak mair.

And out and cam the thick thick bluid,

And out and cam the thin;

And out and cam the bonny herts bluid:

Thair was nae life left in.20

Scho laid him on a dressing borde,

And drest him like a swine,

And laughing said, Gae nou and pley

With your sweit play-feres nine.

[Pg 60]

Scho rowd[\[332\]](#) him in a cake of lead,25

Bade him lie stil and sleip.

Scho cast him in a deip draw-well,

Was fifty fadom deip.

Quhan bells wer rung, and mass was sung,

And every lady went hame:30

Than ilka lady had her yong sonne,

Bot lady Helen had nane.

Scho rowd hir mantil hir about,

And sair sair gan she weip:

And she ran into the Jewis castèl,35

Quhan they wer all asleip.

My bonny sir Hew, my pretty sir Hew,

I pray thee to me speik.

"O lady, rinn to the deip draw-well,

Gin[\[333\]](#) ye your sonne wad seik."40

Lady Helen ran to the deip draw-well,

And knelt upon her kne:

My bonny sir Hew, an[\[334\]](#) ye be here,

I pray thee speik to me.

"The lead is wondrous heavy, mither,45

The well is wondrous deip,

A keen pen-knife sticks in my hert,
A word I dounae[335] speik.
Gae hame, gae hame, my mither deir,
Fetch me my windling sheet,50
And at the back o' Mirry-land toun,
Its thair we twa fall meet."
* * * *

[Pg 61]

IV. SIR CAULINE.



This old romantic tale was preserved in the Editor's folio MS. but in so very defective and mutilated a condition (not from any chasm in the MS. but from great omission in the transcript, probably copied from the faulty recitation of some illiterate minstrell), and the whole appeared so far short of the perfection it seemed to deserve, that the Editor was tempted to add several stanzas in the first part, and still more in the second, to connect and compleat the story in the manner which appeared to him most interesting and affecting.

There is something peculiar in the metre of this old ballad: it is not unusual to meet with redundant stanzas of six lines; but the occasional insertion of a double third or fourth line, as ver. 31, &c. is an irregularity I do not remember to have seen elsewhere.

It may be proper to inform the reader before he comes to Pt. ii. v. 110, 111, that the Round Table was not peculiar to the reign of K. Arthur, but was common in all the ages of chivalry. The proclaiming a great tournament (probably with some peculiar solemnities) was called "holding a Round Table." Dugdale tells us, that the great baron Roger de Mortimer "having procured the honour of knighthood to be conferred 'on his three sons' by K. Edw. I. he, at his own costs, caused a tourneament to be held at Kenilworth; where he sumptuously entertained an hundred knights, and as many ladies, for three days; the like whereof was never before in England; and there began the Round Table, (so called by reason that the place wherein they practised those feats was environed with a strong wall made in a round form:) And upon the fourth day, the golden lion, in sign of triumph, being yielded to him; he carried it (with all the company) to Warwick."—It may further be added, that Matthew Paris frequently calls justs and tournaments *Hastiludia Mensæ Rotundæ*.

As to what will be observed in this ballad of the art of healing being practised by a young princess; it is no more than what is usual in all the old romances, and was conformable to real manners: it being a practice derived from the earliest times among all the Gothic and Celtic nations, for women, even of the highest rank, to exercise the art of surgery. In the Northern Chronicles we always find the young damsels stanching the wounds of their[Pg 62] lovers, and the wives those of their husbands.[336] And even so late as the time of Q. Elizabeth, it is mentioned among the accomplishments of the ladies of her court, that the "eldest of them are skilful in surgery." See Harrison's *Description of England*, prefixed to Hollinshed's *Chronicle*, &c.

[This story of *Sir Cauline* furnishes one of the most flagrant instances of Percy's manipulation of his authorities. In the following poem all the verses which are due to Percy's invention are placed between brackets, but the whole has been so much altered by him that it has been found necessary to reprint the original from the folio MS. at the end in order that readers may compare the two. Percy put into his version several new incidents and altered the ending, by which means he was able to dilute the 201 lines of the MS. copy into 392 of his own. There was no necessity for this perversion of the original, because the story is there complete, and moreover Percy did not sufficiently indicate the great changes he had made, for although nearly every verse is altered he only noted one trivial difference of reading, viz. aukeward for backward (v. 109).

Motherwell reprinted this ballad in his *Minstrelsy*, and in his prefatory note he made the following shrewd guess, which we now know to be a correct one:—"We suspect too that the ancient ballad had a less melancholy catastrophe, and that the brave Syr Cauline, after his combat with the 'hend Soldan' derived as much benefit from the leechcraft of fair Cristabelle as he did after winning the Eldridge sword." Professor Child has expressed the same view in his note to the ballad.

Buchan printed a ballad entitled *King Malcolm and Sir Colvin*, which is more like the original than Percy's version, but Mr. Hales is of opinion that this was one of that collector's fabrications.]

THE FIRST PART.



[In Ireland, ferr over the sea,
There dwelleth a bonnye kinge;
And with him a yong and comlye knighte,
Men call him syr Cauline.
[Pg 63]

The kinge had a ladye to his daughter,5
In fashyon she hath no peere;
And princely wightes that ladye wooed
To be theyr wedded feere.[337]

Syr Cauline loveth her best of all,
But nothing durst he saye;10
Ne descreeve[338] his counsayl to no man,
But deerlye he lovde this may.[339]

Till on a daye it so beffell,
Great dill[340] to him was dight;[341]
The maydens love removde his mynd,15
To care-bed went the knighte.

One while he spred his armes him fro,
One while he spred them nye:

And aye! but I winne that ladyes love,
For dole^[342] now I mun^[343] dye.20

And whan our parish-masse was done,
Our kinge was bowne^[344] to dyne:
He sayes, Where is syr Cauline,
That is wont to serve the wyne?

Then aunswerde him a courteous knighte,25
And fast his handes gan wringe:
Sir Cauline is sicke, and like to dye
Without a good leechinge.^[345]

Fetch me downe my daughter deere,
She is a leech full fine:30
Goe take him doughe,^[346] and the baken bread,
And serve him with the wyne soe red;
[Pg 64] Lothe I were him to tine.^[347]

Fair Christabelle to his chaumber goes,
Her maydens followyng nye:35
O well, she sayth, how doth my lord?
O sicke, thou fayr ladyè.

Nowe ryse up wightlye,^[348] man, for shame,
Never lye soe cowardlee;
For it is told in my fathers halle,40
You dye for love of mee.

Fayre ladye, it is for your love
That all this dill I drye:^[349]
For if you wold comfort me with a kisse,
Then were I brought from bale to blisse,45
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.50

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.^[350]

Some deedes of armes if thou wilt doe,55
My bacheleere to bee,
(But ever and aye my heart wold rue,

Giff[351] harm shold happè to thee,)]

Upon Eldridge[352] hill there groweth a thorne,

Upon the mores brodinge;[353]60

And dare ye, syr knighte, wake there all nighte

[Pg 65] Until the fayre mornìnge?

For the Eldridge knighte, so mickle[354] of mighte,

Will examine you beforne:[355]

And never man bare life awaye,65

But he did him scath[356] and scorne.

[That knighte he is a foul paynì, [357]

And large of limb and bone;

And but if heaven may be thy speede,

Thy life it is but gone.70

Nowe on the Eldridge hilles Ile walke, [358]

For thy sake, fair ladie;]

And He either bring you a ready tokèn,

Or He never more you see

The lady is gone to her own chaumbère,75

Her maydens following bright:

[Syr Cauline lope[359] from care-bed soone,

And to the Eldridge hills is gone,]

For to wake there all night.

Unto midnight, that the moone did rise,80

He walked up and downe;

Then a lightsome bugle heard he blowe

Over the bents[360] soe browne;

Quoth hee, If cryance come till[361] my heart,

I am ffar from any good towne.85

And soone he spyde on the mores so broad,

A furyous wight and fell;[362]

A ladye bright his brydle led,

Clad in a fayre kyrtèl:

And soe fast he called on syr Cauline,90

[Pg 66] O man, I rede[363] thee flye,

For 'but' if cryance comes till thy heart,

I weene but thou mun dye.

He sayth, 'No' cryance comes till my heart,

Nor, in faith, I wyll not flee;95

For, cause thou minged[364] not Christ before,

The less me dreadeth thee.

[The Eldridge knighte, he pricked his steed;
Syr Cauline bold abode:
Then either shooke his trustye speare,]100
And the timber these two children[365] bare
Soe soone in sunder slode.[366]

Then tooke they out theyr two good swordes,
And layden[367] on full faste,
[Till helme and hawberke, mail and sheelde,105
They all were well-nye brast.[368]]

The Eldridge knight was mickle of might,
And stiffe in stower[369] did stande,
But syr Cauline with a 'backward' stroke,[370]
He smote off his right hand;110
That soone he with paine and lacke of bloud
Fell downe on that lay-land.[371]

[Then up syr Cauline lift his brande
All over his head so hye:
And here I sweare by the holy roode,115
Nowe, caytiffe, thou shalt dye.
[Pg 67]

Then up and came that ladye brighte,
Fast wringing of her hande:
For the maydens love, that most you love,
Withold that deadlye brande:120

For the maydens love, that most you love,
Now smyte no more I praye;
And aye whatever thou wilt, my lord,
He shall thy hests[372] obaye.

Now sweare to mee, thou Eldridge knighte,125
And here on this lay-land,
That thou wilt believe on Christ his laye,[373]
And therto plight thy hand:

And that thou never on Eldridge come
To sporte, gamon,[374] or playe:130
And that thou here give up thy armes
Until thy dying daye.

The Eldridge knighte gave up his armes
With many a sorrowfulle sighe;
And sware to obey syr Caulines hest,135
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.140

[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 be slone.[\[375\]](#)

Then he tooke up the Eldridge sworde,145
As hard as any flint:
And he tooke off those ringes five,
[Pg 68] As bright as fyre and brent.

Home then pricked[\[376\]](#) syr Cauline
As light as leafe on tree:150
I-wys he neither stint ne blanne,[\[377\]](#)
Till he his ladye see.

Then downe he knelt upon his knee
Before that lady gay:
O ladye, I have bin on the Eldridge hills:155
These tokens I bring away.

Now welcome, welcome, syr Cauline,
Thrice welcome unto mee,
For now I perceive thou art a true knighte,
Of valour bolde and free.160

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 ladye blushed scarlette redde,165
And fette[\[378\]](#) a gentill sighe:
Alas! syr knight, how may this bee,
For my degree's soe highe?

But sith thou hast hight,[\[379\]](#) thou comely youth,
To be my batchilere,170
Ile promise if thee I may not wedde
I will have none other fere.[\[380\]](#)

Then shee held forthe her lilly-white hand
Towards that knighte so free;
He gave to it one gentill kisse,175

His heart was brought from bale to blisse,
[Pg 69] The teares sterte[381] from his ee.

But keep my counsayl, syr Cauline,
Ne let no man it knowe;
For and ever my father sholde it ken,180
I wot he wolde us sloe.[382]

From that daye forthe that ladye fayre
Lovde syr Cauline the knyghte:
From that daye forthe he only joyde
Whan shee was in his sight.185

Yea and oftentimes they mette
Within a fayre arboure,
Where they in love and sweet daliaunce
Past manye a pleasaunt houre.]

✱ In this conclusion of the *First Part*, and at the beginning of the *Second*, the reader will observe a resemblance to the story of *Sigismunda and Guiscard*, as told by Boccace and Dryden. See the latter's description of the lovers meeting in the cave; and those beautiful lines, which contain a reflection so like this of our poet, "*everye white*," &c., viz.:

"But as extremes are short of ill and good,
And tides at highest mark regorge their flood;
So Fate, that could no more improve their joy,
Took a malicious pleasure to destroy
Tancred, who fondly loved," &c.



[Pg 70]

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 Cauline5
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,10

He found his daughter and syr Cauline

There sette in daliaunce sweet.

The kinge hee sterted forthe, i-wys,[\[383\]](#)

And an angrie man was hee:

Nowe, traytoure, thou shalt hange or drawe,15

And rewe shall thy ladie.

Then forthe syr Cauline he was ledde,

And throwne in dungeon deepe:

And the ladye into a towre so hye,

There left to wayle and weepe.20

The queene she was syr Caulines friend,

And to the kinge sayd shee:

I praye you save syr Caulines life,

And let him banisht bee.

Now, dame, that traitor shall be sent25

Across the salt sea fome:

But here I will make thee a band,[\[384\]](#)

If ever he come within this land,

A foule deathe is his doome.

[Pg 71]

All woe-begone was that gentil knight30

To parte from his ladye;

And many a time he sighed sore,

And cast a wistfulle eye:

Faire Christabelle, from thee to parte,

Farre lever[\[385\]](#) had I dye.35

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.40

And ever shee doth lament and weepe

To tint[\[386\]](#) her lover soe:

Syr Cauline, thou little think'st on mee,

But I will still be true.

Manye a kynge, and manye a duke,45

And lorde of high degree,

Did sue to that fayre ladye of love;

But never shee wolde them nee.[\[387\]](#)

When manye a daye was past and gone,

Ne comforte she colde finde,50

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 love55

Before that faire ladyè.

And many a ladye there was sette

In purple and in palle:[\[388\]](#)

But faire Christabelle soe woe-begone

Was the fayrest of them all.60

[Pg 72]

Then manye a knighte was mickle of might

Before his ladye gaye;

But a stranger wight, whom no man knewe,

He wan the prize eche daye.

His acton[\[389\]](#) it was all of blacke,65

His hewberke,[\[390\]](#) and his sheelde,

Ne noe man wist whence he did come,

Ne noe man knewe where he did gone,

When they came from the feelde.

And now three days were prestlye[\[391\]](#) past70

In feates of chivalrye,

When lo upon the fourth mornìnge

A sorrowfulle sight they see.

A hugye giaunt stiffe and starke,

All foule of limbe and lere;[\[392\]](#)75

Two goggling eyen like fire farden,[\[393\]](#)

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,80

All wan and pale of blee.[\[394\]](#)

Sir, quoth the dwarffe, and louted[\[395\]](#) lowe,

Behold that hend[\[396\]](#) Soldàin!

Behold these heads I beare with me!

They are kings which he hath slain.85

The Eldridge knìght is his own cousìne,

Whom a knight of thine hath shent:[\[397\]](#)

And hee is come to avenge his wrong,

And to thee, all thy knightes among,

Defiance here hath sent.90

[Pg 73]

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.[\[398\]](#)

Thy head, syr king, must goe with mee;95

Or else thy daughter deere;

Or else within these lists soe broad

Thou must finde him a peere.[\[399\]](#)

The king he turned him round aboute,

And in his heart was woe:100

Is there never a knighte of my round tablè,

This matter will undergoe?

[Is there never a knighte amongst yee all

Will fight for my daughter and mee?

Whoever will fight yon grimme soldàn,105

Right fair his meede 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.110

But every knighte of his round table

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,115

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 knighte,

Sayd, Ladye, be not affrayd:120

Ile fight for thee with this grimme soldàn,
Thoughe he be unmacklye[\[400\]](#) made.

[Pg 74]

And if thou wilt lend me the Eldridge sworde,
That lyeth within thy bowre,
I truste in Christe for to slay this fiende¹²⁵
Thoughe he be stiff in stowre.

Goe fetch him downe the Eldridge sworde,
The kinge he cryde, with speede:
Nowe heaven assist thee, courteous knighte;
My daughter is thy meede.[\[401\]](#)¹³⁰

The gyaunt he stepped into the lists,
And sayd, Awaye, awaye:
I sweare, as I am the hend soldàn,
Thou lettest[\[402\]](#) me here all daye.

Then forthe the stranger knight he came¹³⁵
In his blacke armoure 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;¹⁴⁰
And now with swordes soe sharpe of steele,
They gan to lay on load.[\[403\]](#)

The soldan strucke the knighte a stroke,
That made him reele asyde;
Then woe-begone was that fayre ladyè,¹⁴⁵
And thrice she deeply sighde.

The soldan strucke a second stroke,
And made the bloude to flowe:
All pale and wan was that ladye fayre,
And thrice she wept for woe.¹⁵⁰

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

[Pg 75]

The knighte he leapt upon his feete,¹⁵⁵
All recklesse of the pain:
Quoth hee, But[\[404\]](#) heaven be now my speede,

Or else[\[405\]](#) I shall be slaine.

He grasped his sworde with mayne and mighte,
And spying a secrette part,160
He drave it into the soldan's syde,
And pierced him to the heart.

Then all the people gave a shoute,
Whan they sawe the soldan falle:
The ladye wept, and thanked Christ,165
That had reskewed her from thrall.[\[406\]](#)

And nowe the kinge with all his barons
Rose uppe from offe his seate,
And downe he stepped intò the listes,
That curteous knighte to greete.170

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

Come downe, come downe, my daughter deare,175
Thou art a leech of skille;
Farre lever[\[407\]](#) had I lose halfe my landes,
Than this good knighte sholde spille.[\[408\]](#)

Downe then steppeth that fayre ladyè,
To helpe him if she maye;180
But when she did his beavere raise,
It is my life, my lord, she sayes,
And shriekte and swound awaye.

Sir Cauline juste lifte up his eyes
When he heard his ladye crye,185
O ladye, I am thine owne true love;
[\[Pg 76\]](#) For thee I wisht to dye.

Then giving her one partinge looke,
He closed his eyes in death,
Ere Christabelle, that ladye milde,190
Begane to drawe 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.195

O staye, my deare and onlye lord,

For mee thy faithfulle feere;[\[409\]](#)

'Tis meet that I shold followe thee,

Who hast bought my love soe deare.

Then fayntinge in a deadlye swoune,200

And with a deepe-fette[\[410\]](#) sighe,

That burst her gentle heart in twayne,

Fayre Christabelle did dye.]

✻



[The following is the original ballad from which Percy concocted his own. It is reprinted from *Bishop Percy's Folio MS.*, ed. Hales and Furnivall, vol. iii. p. 1.

Iesus: lord mickle of might,

that dyed ffor vs on the roode

to maintaine vs in all our right,

that loues true English blood.

ffor by a *Knight* I say my song,5

was bold & ffull hardye;

Sir Robert Briuse wold fforth to ffight

in-to Ireland ouer the sea;

[Pg 77]

& in *that* land dwells a king

which ouer all does beare the bell,10

& with him there dwelled a curteous *Knight*,

men call him Sir Cawline.

And he hath a Ladye to his daughter,

of ffashyon shee hath noe peere;

Knights & lordes they woed her both,15

trusted to haue beene her peere.

Sir Cawline loues her best of oné,

but nothing durst hee say

to discreewe his counsell to noe man,

but deerlye loued this mayd.20

till itt beffell vpon a day,
great dill to him was dight;
the maydens loue remoued his mind,
to care bed went the Knight;

& one while he spread his armes him ffroe,²⁵
& cryed soe pittiouslye
"ffor the maydens loue *that* I haue most minde,
this day may comfort mee,
or else ere noone I shalbe dead!"
thus can *Sir Cawline* say.³⁰

when our parish masse *that* itt was done,
& our king was bowne to dine,
he sayes, "where is *Sir Cawline*
that was wont to serue me with ale and wine?"

but then answered a curteous *Knight*³⁵
ffast wringing his hands,
"Sir Cawlines sicke, & like to be dead
without and a good leedginge."

"ffeitch yee downe my daughter deere,
shee is a Leech full ffine;⁴⁰
I, and take you doe & the baken bread,
and eene on the wine soe red,
& looke no day[n]tinesse ffor him to deare,
for ffull loth I wold him teene."

this Ladye is gone to his chamber,⁴⁵
her maydens ffollowing Nye,
"O well," shee sayth, "how doth my Lord?"
"O sicke!" againe saith hee.

[Pg 78]

"I, but rise vp wightlye, man, for shame:
neuer lye soe cowardlye here!⁵⁰
itt is told in my ffathers hall,
ffor my loue you will dye."

"itt is ffor *your* Loue, ffayre Ladye,
that all this dill I drye.
ffor if you wold comfort me with a Kisse,⁵⁵
then were I brought ffrom bale to blisse,
noe longer here wold I lye."

"alas! soe well you know, *Sir Knight*,
I cannott bee your peere."

"ffor some deeds of armes ffaine wold I doe60
to be your Bacheeleere."

"vpon Eldridge hill there growes a thorne
vpon the mores brodinge;
& wold you, Sir Knight, wake there all night
to day of the other Morninge?65

"ffor the Eldrige *King that* is mickle of Might
will examine you beforne;
& there was neuer man *that* bare his liffe away
since the day *that* I was borne."

"but I will ffor *your* sake, ffaire Ladye,70
walke on the bents [soe] browne,
& Ile either bring you a readye token
or Ile neuer come to you againe."

but this Ladye is gone to her Chamber,
her Maydens ffollowing bright;75
& Sir Cawlins gone to the mores soe broad,
ffor to wake there all night.

vnto midnight they Moone did rise,
he walked vp and downe,
& a lightsome bugle then heard he blow80
ouer the bents soe browne.
saies hee, "and if cryance come vntill my hart,
I am ffarr ffrom any good towne;"

& he spyed ene a litle him by,
a ffurious King and a ffell,85
& a ladye bright his brydle led,
that seemlye itt was to see;

[Pg 79]

& soe fast hee called vpon Sir Cawline,
"Oh man, I redd thee fflye!
ffor if cryance come vntill thy hart,90
I am a-feard least thou mun dye."

he sayes, "[no] cryance comes to my hart,
nor ifaith I ffeare not thee;
ffor because thou minged not christ before,
Thee lesse me dreadeth thee."95

but Sir Cawline he shooke a speare,
the *King* was bold, and abode,

& the timber these 2 Children bore
soe soone in sunder slode,
ffor they tooke & 2 good swords,100
& they Layden on good Loade.

but the Elridge *King* was mickle of might,
& stiffly to the ground did stand;
but Sir Cawline with an aukeward stroke
he brought him ffrom his hand,105
I, & fflying ouer his head soe hye,
ffell downe of *that* Lay land:

& his lady stood a litle thereby,
ffast ringing her hands:
"for they maydens loue *that* you haue most meed,110
smyte you my Lord no more,

& heest neuer come vpon Eldrige [hill]
him to sport, gamon, or play,
& to meete noe man of middle earth,
& *that* liues on christs his lay."115

but he then vp, and *that* Eldryge *King*
sett him in his sadle againe,
& *that* Eldryge *King* & his Ladye
to their castle are they gone.

& hee tooke then vp & *that* Eldryge sword120
as hard as any fflynt,
& soe he did those ringes 5,
harder than ffyer, and brent.

ffirst he *presented* to the *Kings* daughter
they hand, & then they sword.125
"but a serrett buffett you haue him giuen,
the *King* & the crowne!" she sayd,
"I, but 34 stripes
comen beside the rood."
[Pg 80]

& a Gyant that was both stiffe [&] strong,130
he lope now them amonge,
& vpon his squier 5 heads he bare,
vnmackley made was hee.

& he dranke then on the *Kings* wine,
& hee put the cup in his sleeue;135
& all thé trembled & were wan

ffor feare he shold them greeffe.

"Ile tell thee mine Arrand, *King*," he sayes,

"mine errand what I doe heere;

ffor I will bren thy temples hye,140

or Ile haue thy daughter deere;

in, or else vpon, yond more soe brood

thou shalt ffind mee a ppeare."

the *King* he turned him round about,

(*Lord*, in his heart he was woe!),145

says, "is there noe *Knight* of the round table

this matter will vndergoe?

"I, & hee shall haue my broad Lands,

& keepe them well his liue;

I, and soe hee shall my daughter deere,150

to be his weded wiffe."

& then stood vp Sir Cawline

his owne errand ffor to say.

"ifaith, I wold to god, *Sir*," sayd Sir Cawline,

"*that* Soldan I will assay.155

"goe, ffeitch me downe my Eldrige sword,

ffor I woone itt att [a] ffray."

"but away, away!" sayd the hend Soldan,

"thou tarryest mee here all day!"

but the hend Soldan and Sir Cawline160

thé ffought a *summers* day:

now has hee slaine *that* hend Soldan,

& brought his 5 heads away.

& the *King* has betaken him his broade lands

& all his venison.165

"but take you too & *your* Lands [soe] broad,

& brooke them well *your* liffe,

ffor you *promised* mee *your* daughter deere

to be my weded wiffe."

[Pg 81]

"now by my ffaith," then sayes our *King*,170

"ffor *that* wee will not striffe;

ffor thou shalt haue my daughter dere

to be thy weded wiffe."

the other morninge Sir Cawline rose

by the dawning of the day,175
& vntill a garden did he goe
his Mattins ffor to say;
& *that* bespyed a ffalse steward—
a shames death *that* he might dye!—

& he lett a lyon out of a bande,180
Sir Cawline ffor to teare;
& he had noe wepon him vpon,
nor noe wepon did weare.

but hee tooke then his Mantle of greene,
into the Lyons mouth itt thrust;185
he held the Lyon soe sore to the wall
till the Lyons hart did burst.

& the watchmen cryed vpon the walls
& sayd, "Sir Cawlines slaine!
and with a beast is not ffull litle,190
a Lyon of Mickle mayne."
then the *Kings* daughter shee ffell downe,
"for peerlesse is my payne!"

"O peace, my Lady!" sayes Sir Cawline,
"I haue bought thy loue ffull deere.195
O peace, my Lady!" sayes Sir Cawline,
"peace, Lady, ffor I am heere!"

then he did marry this *Kings* daughter
with gold & siluer bright,
& 15 sonnes this Ladye beere200
to Sir Cawline the Knight.

ffins.]

[Pg 82]

V. EDWARD, EDWARD.

A Scottish Ballad.

From a MS. copy transmitted from Scotland.



[The affectedly antique orthography of this ballad has caused some to suppose that it was a modern invention, probably by Lady Wardlaw, the author of *Hardyknute*, but Motherwell obtained another version from the recitation of an old woman, which he printed in his *Minstrelsy* under the title of "Son Davie, son Davie." He there says that there is reason to believe that Lord Hailes "made a few slight verbal improvements in the copy he transmitted, and altered the hero's name to Edward, a name which, by the bye, never occurs in a Scottish ballad except where allusion is made to an English king."

There is a Swedish ballad of the same character entitled *The Fratricide's Lament and Dialogue with his Mother before he wanders away from home for ever*.

The form of a dialogue between a mother and her son is a favourite one in the old ballads, and "Lord Donald" in Kinloch's *Scottish Ballads* and "Lord Randal" in Scott's *Minstrelsy* bear some likeness to the ballad of "Edward." The hero is supposed to have been poisoned by eating toads prepared as a dish of fishes, and the last stanza of Kinloch's ballad is as follows:—

"What will ye leave to your true love, Lord Donald,
My son?

What will ye leave to your true love,
My jollie young man?

The tow and the halter for to hang on yon tree,
And lat her hang there for the poysoning o' me."]

[Pg 83]



Quhy dois your brand sae drop wi' bluid,[\[411\]](#)

Edward, Edward?

Quhy dois your brand sae drop wi' bluid?

And quhy sae sad gang yee, O?[\[412\]](#)

O, I hae killed my hauke sae guid,5

Mither, mither:

O, I hae killed my hauke sae guid:

And I had nae mair bot hee,[\[413\]](#) O.

Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,

Edward, Edward.10

Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,

My deir son I tell thee, O.

O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid,

Mither, Mither:

O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid,15

That erst was sae fair and free, O.

Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,

Edward, Edward:

Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,

Sum other dule ye drie,[\[414\]](#) O.20

O, I hae killed my fadir deir,

Mither, mither:

O, I hae killed my fadir deir,

Alas! and wae is me, O!

And quhatten penance wul ye drie[\[415\]](#) for that,25

Edward, Edward?

And quhatten penance will ye drie for that?

My deir son, now tell me, O.

Ile set my feit in yonder boat,

[Pg 84] Mither, mither:30

Ile set my feit in yonder boat,

And Ile fare[\[416\]](#) ovir the sea, O.

And quhat wul ye doe wi' your towirs and your ha',[\[417\]](#)

Edward, Edward?

And quhat wul ye doe wi' your towirs and your ha',35

That were sae fair to see, O?

Ile let thame stand til they doun fa',[\[418\]](#)

Mither, mither:

Ile let thame stand til they doun fa',

For here nevir mair maun I bee, O.40

And quhat wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,

Edward, Edward?

And quhat wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,

Quhan ye gang ovir the sea, O?

The warldis room,[\[419\]](#) let thame beg throw life,45

Mither, mither:

The warldis room, let thame beg throw life,

For thame nevir mair wul I see, O.

And quhat wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,

Edward, Edward?50

And quhat wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?

My deir son, now tell me, O.

The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,

Mither, mither:

The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,55

Sic counseils ye gave to me, O.

This curious song was transmitted to the editor by Sir David Dalrymple, Bart., late Lord Hailes.

[Pg 85]



This old Romantic Legend (which is given from two copies, one of them in the editor's folio MS., but which contained very great variations), bears marks of considerable antiquity, and, perhaps, ought to have taken place of any in this volume. It would seem to have been written while part of Spain was in the hands of the Saracens or Moors: whose empire there was not fully extinguished before the year 1491. The Mahometans are spoken of in v. 49, &c., just in the same terms as in all other old romances. The author of the ancient Legend of *Sir Bevis* represents his hero, upon all occasions, breathing out defiance against

"Mahound and Termagaunte;"[420]

and so full of zeal for his religion, as to return the following polite message to a Paynim king's fair daughter, who had fallen in love with him, and sent two Saracen knights to invite him to her bower,

"I wyll not ones stirre off this grounde,

To speake with an heathen hounde.

Unchristen houndes, I rede you fle.

Or I your harte bloud shall se."[421]

Indeed they return the compliment by calling him elsewhere "A christen hounde." [422]

This was conformable to the real manners of the barbarous ages: perhaps the same excuse will hardly serve our bard, for that Adland should be found lolling or leaning at his gate (v. 35) may be thought, perchance, a little out of character. And yet the great painter of manners, Homer, did not think it inconsistent with decorum to represent a king of the Taphians leaning at the gate of Ulysses to inquire for that monarch, when he touched at Ithaca as he was taking a voyage with a ship's cargo of iron to dispose in traffic.[423] So little ought we to judge of ancient manners by our own.

Before I conclude this article, I cannot help observing, that the [Pg 86]reader will see, in this ballad, the character of the old Minstrels (those successors of the Bards) placed in a very respectable light:[424] here he will see one of them represented mounted on a fine horse, accompanied with an attendant to bear his harp after him, and to sing the poems of his composing. Here he will see him mixing in the company of kings without ceremony: no mean proof of the great antiquity of this poem. The farther we carry our inquiries back, the greater respect we find paid to the professors of poetry and music among all the Celtic and Gothic nations. Their character was deemed so sacred, that under its sanction our famous king Alfred (as we have already seen)[425] made no scruple to enter the Danish camp, and was at once admitted to the king's headquarters.[426] Our poet has suggested the same expedient to the heroes of this ballad. All the histories of the North are full of the great reverence paid to this order of men. Harold Harfagre, a celebrated King of Norway, was wont to seat them at his table above all the officers of his court: and we find another Norwegian king placing five of them by his side in a day of battle, that they might be eye-witnesses of the great exploits they were to celebrate.[427] As to Estmere's riding into the hall while the kings were at table, this was usual in the ages of chivalry; and even to this day we see a relic of this custom still kept up, in the champion's riding into Westminster Hall during the coronation dinner.[428]

Some liberties have been taken with this tale by the editor, but none without notice to the reader in that part which relates

to the subject of the harper and his attendant.

[Percy refers to two copies of this ballad, but there is every reason to believe that one of these was the bishop's own composition, as it was never seen by others and has not since been found. The copy from the folio MS. was torn out by Percy when he was preparing the fourth edition of the *Reliques* for the press, and is now unfortunately lost, so that we have no means of telling what alterations he made in addition to those which he mentions in the footnotes. The readings in the fourth edition are changed in several places from those printed in the first edition.]

[Pg 87]



Hearken to me, gentlemen,
Come and you shall heare;
He tell you of two of the boldest brethren[\[429\]](#)
That ever borne y-were.

The tone[\[430\]](#) of them was Adler younge,5
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:[\[431\]](#)10
When will ye marry a wyfe, brothèr,
A wyfe to glad us all?

Then bespake him kyng Estmere,
And answered him hastilee:[\[432\]](#)
I know not that ladye in any land15
That's able[\[433\]](#) to marrye with mee.

Kyng Adland hath a daughter, brother,
Men call her bright and sheene;[\[434\]](#)
If I were kyng here in your stead,
That ladye shold be my queene.20

Saies, Reade me,[\[435\]](#) reade me, deare brother,
Throughout merry Englànd,
Where we might find a messenger
Betwixt us towe to sende.

[Pg 88]

Saies, You shal ryde yourselfe, brothèr,25
He beare you companye;

Many through fals messengers are deceived,[\[436\]](#)

And I feare lest soe shold wee.

Thus the renisht[\[437\]](#) them to ryde

Of twoe good renisht[\[438\]](#) steeds,30

And when the came to king Adlands halle,

Of redd gold shone their weeds.[\[439\]](#)

And when the came to kyng Adlands hall

Before the goodlye gate,

There they found good kyng Adlånd35

Rearing[\[440\]](#) 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.40

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 daughtèr45

Syr Bremor the kyng of Spayne;[\[441\]](#)

And then she nicked[\[442\]](#) him of naye,

And I doubt sheele[\[443\]](#) do you the same.

The kyng of Spayne is a foule paynim,[\[444\]](#)

And 'leeveth[\[445\]](#) on Mahound;50

And pitye it were that fayre ladyè

Shold marrye a heathen hound.

[Pg 89]

But grant to me, sayes kyng Estmere,

For my love I you praye;

That I may see your daughter deere55

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.60

Downe then came that mayden fayre,

With ladyes laced in pall,[\[446\]](#)

And halfe a hundred of bold knightes,

To bring her from bowre to hall;

And as many gentle squiers,65

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.70

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,75

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;80

Remember well the kyng of Spayne,

What he sayd yesterdaye.

He wold pull downe my halles and castles,

And reave[\[447\]](#) me of my lyfe

I cannot blame him if he doe,85

If I reave him of his wyfe.

[Pg 90]

Your castles and your towres, father,

Are stronglye built about;

And therefore of the king of Spaine[\[448\]](#)

Wee neede not stande in doubt.90

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 kyng Estmere he plight his troth95

By heaven and his righte 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,100

To fetch him dukes and lordes and knightes,

That married the might bee.

They had not ridden scant a myle,
A myle forthe of the towne,
But in did come the kyng of Spayne,105
With kempès[\[449\]](#) many one.

But in did come the kyng of Spayne,
With manye a bold baròne,
Tone day to marrye kyng Adlands daughter,
Tother daye to carrye her home.110

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 ladyè.

One whyle then the page he went,115
Another while he ranne;
Till he had oretaken king Estmere,
[Pg 91] I wis, he never blanne.[\[450\]](#)

Tydings, tydings, kyng Estmere!
What tydinges nowe, my boye?120
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 Spayne125
With kempès many a one:

But in did come the kyng of Spayne
With manye a bold baròne,
Tone daye to marrye king Adlands daughter,
Tother daye to carry her home.130

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,135
My reade shall ryde[\[451\]](#) at thee,
Whether it is better to turne and fighte,
Or goe home and loose my ladye.

Now hearken to me, sayes Adler yonge,
And your reade must rise[\[452\]](#) at me,140
I quicklye will devise a waye

To sette thy ladye free.

My mother was a westerne woman,
And learned in gramaryè.[\[453\]](#)

And when I learned at the schole,145
[Pg 92] 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:150

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,155
Out of the north countrie;
And Ile be your boy, soe faine of fighte,[\[454\]](#)
And beare your harpe by your knee.

And you shal be the best harpèr,
That ever tooke harpe in hand;160
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,165
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.170

And whan the came to kyng Adlands hall,
Untill the fayre hall yate,[\[455\]](#)
There they found a proud portèr
Rearing himselfe thereatt.

[Pg 93]

Sayes, Christ thee save, thou proud portèr;175
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;180

Wee 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 brother185

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.190

Sore he looked on kyng Estmère,

And sore he handled the ryng,

Then opened to them the fayre hall yates,

He lett[\[456\]](#) for no kind of thyng.

Kyng Estmere he stabled his steede195

Soe fayre att the hall bord;

The froth, that came from his brydle bitte,

Light in kyng Bremors beard.

Saies, Stable thy steed, thou proud harpèr,

Saies, Stable him in the stalle;200

It doth not beseeme a proud harpèr

To stable 'him' in a kyngs halle.[\[457\]](#)

[Pg 94]

My ladde he is so lither,[\[458\]](#) he said,

He will doe nought that's meete;

And is there any man in this hall205

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.210

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,[\[459\]](#)215

And looked him in the eare;

For all the gold, that was under heaven,

He durst not neigh him neare.[\[460\]](#)

And how nowe, kempe, said the kyng of Spaine,

And how what aileth thee?220

He saies, It is writt in his forhead

All and in gramaryè,

That for all the gold that is under heaven,

I dare not neigh him nye.

Then kyng Estmere pulld forth his harpe,225

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 thee230

For and thou playes as thou beginns,

Thou'lt till[\[461\]](#) my bryde from mee.

[Pg 95]

He stroake upon his harpe againe,

And playd a pretty thinge;

The ladye lough[\[462\]](#) a loud laughter,235

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'

As heere bee ringes in the hall.240

What wold ye doe with my harpe, 'he sayd,

If I did sell itt yee?

"To playe my wiffe and me a Fitt,[\[463\]](#)

When abed together wee bee."

Now sell me, quoth hee, thy bryde soe gay,245

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?250

More seemelye it is for her fayre bodye

To lye by mee then thee.

Hee played agayne both loud and shrille,[\[464\]](#)

And Adler he did syng,

"O ladye, this is thy owne true love;255

Noe harper, but a kyng.

"O ladye, this is thy owne true love,
As playnlye thou mayest see;
And Ile rid thee of that foule paynim,
[Pg 96] Who partes thy love and thee."260

The ladye 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,265
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[465] he drew his brand;[466]270
And Estmere he, and Adler yonge
Right stiffe in stour[467] can stand.

And aye their swordes soe sore can byte,
Throughe help of Gramaryè
That soone they have slayne the kempery men,275
Or forst them forth to flee.

Kyng Estmere tooke that fayre ladyè,
And marryed her to his wiffe,
And brought her home to merry Englànd
With her to leade his life.280



* The word *Gramaryè*, [468] 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, if not the art of necromancy itself.

††† *Termagaunt* (mentioned above, p. 85) is the name given in the old romances to the god of the Saracens, in which he is constantly [Pg 97]linked with *Mahound* or Mahomet. Thus, in the legend of *Syr Guy*, the Soudan (Sultan), swears

"So helpe me *Mahowne* of might,
And *Termagaunt* my god so bright."

Sign. p. iii. b.

This word is derived by the very learned editor of Junius from the Anglo-Saxon *Týn* very, and *Maȝan* mighty. As this word had so sublime a derivation, and was so applicable to the true God, how shall we account for its being so degraded?

Perhaps Týr-mazan or *Termagant* had been a name originally given to some Saxon idol, before our ancestors were converted to Christianity; or had been the peculiar attribute of one of their false deities; and therefore the first Christian missionaries rejected it as profane and improper to be applied to the true God. Afterwards, when the irruptions of the Saracens into Europe, and the Crusades into the East, had brought them acquainted with a new species of unbelievers, our ignorant ancestors, who thought all that did not receive the Christian law were necessarily pagans and idolaters, supposed the Mahometan creed was in all respects the same with that of their pagan forefathers, and therefore made no scruple to give the ancient name of *Termagant* to the god of the Saracens, just in the same manner as they afterwards used the name of *Sarazen* to express any kind of pagan or idolater. In the ancient romance of *Merline* (in the editor's folio MS.) the Saxons themselves that came over with Hengist, because they were not Christians, are constantly called Sarazens.

However that be, it is certain that, after the times of the Crusades, both *Mahound* and *Termagaunt* made their frequent appearance in the pageants and religious interludes of the barbarous ages; in which they were exhibited with gestures so furious and frantic, as to become proverbial. Thus Skelton speaks of Wolsey:—

"Like *Mahound* in a play,
No man dare him withsay."

Ed. 1736, p. 158.

In like manner Bale, describing the threats used by some papist magistrates to his wife, speaks of them as "grennyng upon her lyke *Termagauntes* in a playe." (*Actes of Engl. Votaryes*, pt. ii. fo. 83, Ed. 1550, 12mo.) Accordingly in a letter of Edward Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College, to his wife or sister, who, it seems, with all her fellows (the players), had been "by my Lorde Maiors officer[s] mad to rid in a cart," he expresses his concern that she should "fall into the hands of suche *Tarmagants*." (So the orig. dated May 2, 1593, preserved by the care of the Rev. Thomas Jenyns Smith, Fellow of Dulw. Coll.) Hence we may conceive[Pg 98] the force of Hamlet's expression in Shakspeare, where, condemning a ranting player, he says, "I could have such a fellow whipt for ore-doing *Termagant*: it out-herods Herod" (Act iii. sc. 3). By degrees the word came to be applied to an outrageous turbulent person, and especially to a violent brawling woman; to whom alone it is now confined, and this the rather as, I suppose, the character of *Termagant* was anciently represented on the stage after the eastern mode, with long robes or petticoats.

Another frequent character in the old pageants or interludes of our ancestors, was the *sowdan* or *soldan*, representing a grim eastern tyrant. This appears from a curious passage in Stow's *Annals* (p. 458). In a stage-play "the people know right well that he that plaieth the *sowdain*, is percase a sowter [shoe-maker]; yet if one should cal him by his owne name, while he standeth in his majestie, one of his tormenters might hap to break his head." The *sowdain*, or *soldan*, was a name given to the Sarazen king (being only a more rude pronounciation of the word *sultan*), as the soldan of Egypt, the soudan of Persia, the sowdan of Babylon, &c., who were generally represented as accompanied with grim Sarazens, whose business it was to punish and torment Christians.

I cannot conclude this short memoir, without observing that the French romancers, who had borrowed the word *Termagant* from us, and applied it as we in their old romances, corrupted it into *Tervagaunte*; and from them La Fontaine took it up, and has used it more than once in his tales. This may be added to the other proofs adduced in these volumes of the great intercourse that formerly subsisted between the old minstrels and legendary writers of both nations, and that they mutually borrowed each other's romances.

VII.

SIR PATRICK SPENCE,



Is given from two MS. copies transmitted from Scotland. In what age the hero of this ballad lived, or when this fatal expedition happened that proved so destructive to the Scots nobles, I have not been able to discover; yet am of opinion, that their catastrophe is not altogether without foundation in history, though it has escaped my own[Pg 99] researches. In the infancy of navigation, such as used the northern seas were very liable to shipwreck in the wintry months: hence a law was enacted in the reign of James III. (a law which was frequently repeated afterwards), "That there be na schip frauched out of the realm with any staple gudes, fra the feast of Simons day and Jude, unto the feast of the purification of our Lady called Candelmess." *Jam. III. Parlt. 2, ch. 15.*

In some modern copies, instead of Patrick Spence hath been substituted the name of Sir Andrew Wood, a famous Scottish admiral who flourished in the time of our Edward IV., but whose story has nothing in common with this of the ballad. As Wood was the most noted warrior of Scotland, it is probable that, like the Theban Hercules, he hath engrossed the renown of other heroes.

[The fact that this glorious ballad was never heard of before Percy printed it in 1765, caused some to throw doubts upon its authenticity, and their scepticism was strengthened by the note at p. 102, which refers to the author of *Hardyknute*. It was thought that the likeness in expression and sentiment there mentioned might easily be explained if the two poems were both by Lady Wardlaw. This view, advocated by Robert Chambers in his general attack on the authenticity of all *The Romantic Scottish Ballads* (1859), has not met with much favour, and Professor Child thinks that the arguments against the genuineness of *Sir Patrick Spence* are so trivial as hardly to admit of statement. He writes, "If not ancient it has been always accepted as such by the most skilful judges, and is a solitary instance of a successful imitation in manner and spirit of the best specimens of authentic minstrelsy." [\[469\]](#) Coleridge, no mean judge of a ballad, wrote—

"The bard be sure was weather-wise who framed
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens."

Antiquaries have objected that Spence is not an early Scottish name, but in this they are wrong, for Professor Aytoun found it in a charter of Robert III. and also in Wyntoun's *Chronicle*.

There has been considerable discussion as to the historical event referred to in the ballad, and the present version does not contain any mention of one of the points that may help towards a settlement of the question. The version in Scott's *Minstrelsy* contains the following stanza:—

"To Noroway, to Noroway
To Noroway o'er the faem
The king's daughter of Noroway
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

[Pg 100]

Professor Aytoun would change the third line to

"The king's daughter to Noroway,"

as he agrees with Motherwell in the view that the ballad refers to the fate of the Scottish nobles who in 1281 conveyed Margaret, daughter of Alexander III., to Norway, on the occasion of her nuptials with King Eric.

Fordun relates this incident as follows:—"In the year 1281 Margaret, daughter of Alexander III., was married to the King of Norway, who, leaving Scotland in the last day of July, was conveyed thither in noble style in company with many knights and nobles. In returning home after the celebration of her nuptials, the Abbot of Balmerinoch, Bernard of Monte-alto, and many other persons, were drowned." As to the scene of the disaster, Aytoun brings forward an interesting illustration of the expression "half over to Aberdour," in line 41. He says that in the little island of Papa Stronsay one of the Orcadian group lying over against Norway, there is a large grave or tumulus which has been known to the inhabitants from time immemorial as "the grave of Sir Patrick Spens," and he adds, that as the Scottish ballads were not early current in Orkney, it is unlikely that the poem originated the name.

The other suggestions as to an historical basis for the ballad are not borne out by history. It is well, however, to note in illustration of line 1, that the Scottish kings chiefly resided in their palace of Dunfermline from the time of Malcolm Canmore to that of Alexander III.

The present copy of the ballad is the shortest of the various versions, but this is not a disadvantage, as it gains much in force by the directness of its language.

Buchan prints a ballad called *Young Allan*, which is somewhat like *Sir Patrick Spence*.]



The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
O quhar will I get guid sailòr,
To sail this schip of mine?

Up and spak an eldern knicht,⁵
Sat at the kings richt kne:
Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailòr,
That sails upon the se.

[Pg 101]

The king has written a braid letter,^[470]
And signd it wi' his hand;¹⁰
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch lauched he:
The next line that Sir Patrick red,¹⁵
The teir blinded his ee.

O quha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me;

To send me out this time o'the yeir,
To sail upon the se?20
Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne.[\[471\]](#)
O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.
Late late yestreen I saw the new moone25
Wi' the auld moone in hir arme;
And I feir, I feir, my deir mastèr,
That we will com to harme.
O our Scots nobles wer richt laith[\[472\]](#)
To weet their cork-heild schoone;[\[473\]](#)30
Bot lang owre[\[474\]](#) a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.[\[475\]](#)
O lang, lang, may thair ladies sit
Wi' thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence35
Cum sailing to the land.
[Pg 102]
O lang, lang, may the ladies stand
Wi' thair gold kems[\[476\]](#) in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.40
Have owre,[\[477\]](#) have owre to Aberdour,[\[478\]](#)
It's fiftie fadom deip:
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feit.[\[479\]](#)

VIII.

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE.



We have here a ballad of Robin Hood (from the editor's folio MS.) which was never before printed, and carries marks of much greater antiquity than any of the common popular songs on this subject.

The severity of those tyrannical forest laws that were introduced by our Norman kings, and the great temptation of breaking them by such as lived near the royal forests at a time when the yeomanry of this kingdom were everywhere trained up to the long-bow, and excelled all other nations in the art of shooting, must constantly have occasioned great

numbers of outlaws, [Pg 103]and especially of such as were the best marksmen. These naturally fled to the woods for shelter, and, forming into troops, endeavoured by their numbers to protect themselves from the dreadful penalties of their delinquency. The ancient punishment for killing the king's deer was loss of eyes and castration, a punishment far worse than death. This will easily account for the troops of banditti which formerly lurked in the royal forests, and, from their superior skill in archery and knowledge of all the recesses of those unfrequented solitudes, found it no difficult matter to resist or elude the civil power.

Among all those, none was ever more famous than the hero of this ballad, whose chief residence was in Shirewood forest, in Nottinghamshire, and the heads of whose story, as collected by Stow, are briefly these.

"In this time [about the year 1190, in the reign of Richard I.] were many robbers, and outlawes, among the which Robin Hood, and Little John, renowned theeves, continued in woods, despoyling and robbing the goods of the rich. They killed none but such as would invade them; or by resistance for their own defence.

"The saide Robert entertained an hundred tall men and good archers with such spoiles and thefts as he got, upon whom four hundred (were they ever so strong) durst not give the onset. He suffered no woman to be oppressed, violated, or otherwise molested: poore mens goods he spared, abundantlie relieving them with that which by theft he got from abbeyes and the houses of rich carles: whom Maior (the historian) blameth for his rapine and theft, but of all theeves he affirmeth him to be the prince, and the most gentle theefe."—*Annals*, p. 159.

The personal courage of this celebrated outlaw, his skill in archery, his humanity, and especially his levelling principle of taking from the rich and giving to the poor, have in all ages rendered him the favourite of the common people, who, not content to celebrate his memory by innumerable songs and stories, have erected him into the dignity of an earl. Indeed, it is not impossible but our hero, to gain the more respect from his followers, or they to derive the more credit to their profession, may have given rise to such a report themselves: for we find it recorded in an epitaph, which, if genuine, must have been inscribed on his tombstone near the nunnery of Kirklees in Yorkshire; where (as the story goes) he was bled to death by a treacherous nun to whom he applied for phlebotomy:—

"Hear undernead dis laitl stean
laiȝ robert earl of huntingtun
nea arcir ver aȝ hie sae geud
an pipl kauld im Robin Heud
[Pg 104] sick utlaws as hi an is men
vil England nivir si agen.
obiit 24 kal. dekembris. 1247."[480]

This epitaph appears to me suspicious; however, a late antiquary has given a pedigree of *Robin Hood*, which, if genuine, shows that he had real pretensions to the Earldom of Huntingdon, and that his true name was *Robert Fitz-ooth*. [481] Yet the most ancient poems on Robin Hood make no mention of this earldom. He is expressly asserted to have been a yeoman [482] in a very old legend in verse, preserved in the archives of the public library at Cambridge, [483] in eight *fyttes*, or parts, printed in black letter, quarto, thus inscribed: "¶ Here begynneth a lytell geste of Robyn hode and his meyne, and of the proude sheryfe of Notyngham." The first lines are—

"Lithe and lysten, gentylnen,
That be of fre-bore blode:
I shall you tell of a good *yeman*,
His name was Robyn hode.

"Robyn was a proude out-lawe,
Whiles he walked on groundes;
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one,
Was never none yfounde," &c.

The printer's colophon is, "¶ Explicit Kinge Edwarde and Robin hode and Lyttel Johan. Enprented at London in Flete-strete at the sygne of the sone by Wynkin de Worde." In Mr. Garrick's Collection[\[484\]](#) is a different edition of the same poem, "¶ Imprinted at London upon the thre Crane wharfe by Wyllyam Copland," containing at the end a little dramatic piece on the subject of Robin Hood and the Friar, not found in the former copy, called, "A newe playe for to be played in Maye games very plesaunte and full of pastyme. ¶(.:.)¶."

I shall conclude these preliminary remarks with observing, that the hero of this ballad was the favourite subject of popular songs so early as the time of King Edward III. In the *Visions of Pierce Plowman*, written in that reign, a monk says:—

"I can rimes of Roben Hod, and Randal of Chester,
But of our Lorde and our Lady, I lerne nothyng at all."

Fol. 26, ed. 1550.

[Pg 105]

See also in Bishop Latimer's *Sermons*[\[485\]](#) a very curious and characteristic story, which shows what respect was shown to the memory of our archer in the time of that prelate.

The curious reader will find many other particulars relating to this celebrated outlaw, in Sir John Hawkins's *Hist. of Music*, vol. iii. p. 410, 4to.

For the catastrophe of Little John, who, it seems, was executed for a robbery on Arbor-hill, Dublin (with some curious particulars relating to his skill in archery), see Mr. J. C. Walker's ingenious *Memoir on the Armour and Weapons of the Irish*, p. 129, annexed to his *Historical Essay on the Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish*. Dublin, 1788, 4to.

Some liberties were, by the editor, taken with this ballad; which, in this edition, hath been brought nearer to the folio MS.

[Robin Hood is first mentioned in literature in *Piers Plowman*, the earliest of the three forms of which poem was written probably about the year 1362. The ballad of *Robin Hood and the Monk*, printed in Child's *English and Scottish Ballads*, as the oldest of its class, and possibly as old as the reign of Edward II., commences:—

"In somer when the shawes be sheyne
And leves be large and longe
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here the foulys song."

Verses which bear a strong likeness to the opening lines of the present ballad.

Gisborne is a market town in the West Riding of the county of York on the borders of Lancashire, and Guy of that place is mentioned by William Dunbar in a satirical piece on "Schir Thomas Nory," where he is named in company with Adam Bell and other well-known worthies.

It is not needful to extend this note with any further particulars of Robin Hood, as he possesses, in virtue of his position as a popular hero, a literature of his own. Those who wish to know more of his exploits should consult Ritson's (1795) and Gutch's (1847) Collections of *Robin Hood Ballads*, Child's *Ballads*, vol. v. and Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden*

There are several Robin Hood Ballads in the folio MS., but Percy only chose the one containing an account of the encounter with Guy for printing. Ritson copied this ballad from Percy's book, but indulged at the same time in a tirade against the bishop's treatment of his original.]

[Pg 106]



When shaws beene sheene,[\[486\]](#) and shradds[\[487\]](#) full fayre,[\[488\]](#)

And leaves both large and longe,

Itt is merrye walking in the fayre forrèst

To heare the small birdes songe.[\[489\]](#)

The woodweele[\[490\]](#) sang, and wold not cease,[\[491\]](#)5

[Sitting upon the spraye,[\[492\]](#)

Soe lowde, he wakened Robin Hood,[\[492\]](#)

In the greenwood where he lay.[\[492\]](#)

Now by my faye,[\[493\]](#) sayd jollye Robìn,[\[492\]](#)

A sweaven[\[494\]](#) I had this night;[\[492\]](#)10

I dreamt me of tow wighty[\[495\]](#) yemen,[\[492\]](#)

That fast with me can fight.][[\[492\]](#)

Methought they did mee beate and binde,

And tooke my bow mee froe;[\[496\]](#)

If I be Robin alive in this lande,15

Ile be wroken[\[497\]](#) on them towe.

Sweavens are swift, Master, quoth John,

As the wind that blowes ore a hill;

For if itt be never so loude this night,

To-morrow itt may be still.20

[Pg 107]

Buske yee, bowne yee,[\[498\]](#) my merry men all,

And John shall goe with mee,

For Ile goe seeke yond wight yeomen,

In greenwood where thé bee.

Thé cast on their gownes of grene,25

[And tooke theyr bowes each one;

And they away to the greene forrèst]

A shooting forth are gone;[\[499\]](#)

Untill they came to the merry greenwood,
Where they had gladdest bee,30
There were thé ware[\[500\]](#) of a wight yeomàn,
His body leaned to a tree.

A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,
Of manye a man the bane;[\[501\]](#)
And he was clad in his capull hyde[\[502\]](#)35
Topp and tayll and mayne.

Stand you still, master, quoth Litle John,
Under this tree so grene,
And I will go to yond wight yeoman
To know what he doth meane.[\[503\]](#)40

Ah! John, by me thou settest noe store,
And that I farley[\[504\]](#) finde:[\[505\]](#)
How offt send I my men beffore,
And tarry my selfe behinde?

It is no cunning a knave to ken,45
And a man but heare him speake;
And itt were not for bursting of my bowe,
[Pg 108] John, I thy head wold breake.

As often wordes they breeden bale,[\[506\]](#)
So they parted Robin and John;50
And John is gone to Barnesdale:
The gates[\[507\]](#) he knoweth eche one.

But when he came to Barnesdale,
Great heavinesse there hee hadd,
For he found tow of his owne fellòwes55
Were slaine both in a slade.[\[508\]](#)

And Scarlette he was flyinge a-foote
Fast over stocke and stone,
For the sheriffe with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.60

One shoote now I will shoote, quoth John,[\[509\]](#)
With Christ his might and mayne;
Ile make yond fellow that flyes soe fast,
To stopp he shall be fayne.[\[510\]](#)

Then John bent up his long bende-bowe,[\[511\]](#)65
And fetteled[\[512\]](#) him to shoote:
The bow was made of a tender bough,

And fell downe to his foote.

Woe worth, woe worth thee, wicked wood,[\[513\]](#)

That ere thou grew on a tree;⁷⁰

For now this day thou art my bale,

[Pg 109] My boote[\[514\]](#) when thou shold bee.

His shoote it was but loosely shott,

Yet flewe not the arrowe in vaine,[\[515\]](#)

For itt mett one of the sherriffes men,⁷⁵

Good William a Trent was slaine.

It had bene better of William a Trent

To have bene abed with sorrowe,[\[516\]](#)

Than to be that day in the green wood slade[\[517\]](#)

To meet with Little Johns arrowe.[\[518\]](#)⁸⁰

But as it is said, when men be mett

Fyve can doe more than three,[\[519\]](#)

The sheriffe hath taken little John,[\[520\]](#)

And bound him fast to a tree.

Thou shalt be drawen by dale and downe,⁸⁵

And hanged hye on a hill.

But thou mayst fayle of thy purpose, quoth John,[\[521\]](#)

If itt be Christ his will.[\[522\]](#)

Let us leave talking of Litle John,

And thinke of Robin Hood,[\[523\]](#)⁹⁰

How he is gone to the wight yeomàn,

Where under the leaves he stood.

[Pg 110]

Good morrowe, good fellowe, sayd Robin so fayre,[\[524\]](#)

"Good morrowe, good fellow, quoth he:"

Methinkes by this bowe thou beares in thy hande⁹⁵

A good archere thou sholdst bee.[\[525\]](#)

I am wilfull[\[526\]](#) of my waye, quo' the yeman,[\[527\]](#)

And of my morning tyde.

Ile lead thee through the wood, sayd Robin;

Good fellow, Ile be thy guide.¹⁰⁰

I seeke an outlàwe, the straunger sayd,[\[528\]](#)

Men call him Robin Hood;

Rather Ild meet with that proud outlàwe[\[529\]](#)

Than fortye pound soe good.[\[529\]](#)

[Now come with me, thou wighty yeman,[\[530\]](#)¹⁰⁵

And Robin thou soone shalt see:[530]

But first let us some pastime find[530]

Under the greenwood tree.][530]

First let us some masterye[531] make[532]

Among the woods so even,[532]110

Wee may chance to meet with Robin Hood

[Pg 111] Here att some unsett steven.[533]

They cutt them downe two summer shroggs,[534]

That grew both under a breere,[535]

And sett them threescore rood in twaine115

To shoote the prickes[536] y-fere.[537]

Leade on, good fellowe, quoth Robin Hood,[538]

Leade on, I doe bidd thee.

Nay by my faith, good fellowe, hee sayd,[539]

My leader thou shalt bee.[540]120

The first time Robin shot at the pricke,[541]

He mist but an inch it froe:[541]

The yeoman he was an archer good,[541]

But he cold never shoote soe.

The second shoote had the wightye yeman,[542]125

He shote within the garlände:[543]

But Robin he shott far better than hee,

For he clave the good pricke wande.[544]

A blessing upon thy heart, he sayd:[545]

Good fellowe, thy shooting is goode;130

For an thy hart be as good as thy hand,

Thou wert better then Robin Hoode.

[Pg 112]

Now tell me thy name, good fellowe, sayd he,[546]

Under the leaves of lyne.[547]

Nay by my faith, quoth bolde Robìn,[548]135

Till thou have told me thine.[549]

I dwell by dale and downe, quoth hee,

And Robin to take Ime sworne;

And when I am called by my right name

I am Guye of good Gisbòrne.140

My dwelling is in this wood, sayes Robin,

By thee I set right nought:

I am Robin Hood of Barnèsdale,

Whom thou so long hast sought.[\[550\]](#)

He that had neither beene kithe nor kin,145

Might have seene a full fayre sight,

To see how together these yeomen went

With blades both browne[\[551\]](#) and bright.

[Pg 113]

To see how these yeomen together they fought[\[552\]](#)

Two howres of a summers day:150

Yett neither Robin Hood nor sir Guy[\[553\]](#)

Them fettled to flye away.

Robin was reachles[\[554\]](#) on a roote,

And stumbled at that tyde;

And Guy was quicke and nimble with-all,155

And hitt him ore the left side.

Ah deere Lady, sayd Robin Hood, tho

That art both mother and may',[\[555\]](#)

I think it was never mans destinye

To dye before his day.160

Robin thought on our ladye deere,

And soone leapt up againe,

And strait he came with a "backward" stroke,[\[556\]](#)

And he sir Guy hath slayne.[\[557\]](#)

He took sir Guys head by the hayre,165

And sticked itt on his bowes end:

Thou hast beene a traytor all thy liffe,

Which thing must have an ende.

[Pg 114]

Robin pulled forth an Irish kniffe,

And nicked sir Guy in the face,170

That he was never on woman born,

Cold tell whose head it was.[\[558\]](#)

Saies, Lye there, lye there, now sir Guye,[\[559\]](#)

And with me be not wrothe;

If thou have had the worse strokes at my hand,175

Thou shalt have the better clothe.

Robin did off his gowne of greene,

And on sir Guy did it throwe,

And hee put on that capull hyde,

That cladd him topp to toe.180

The bowe, the arrowes, and little horne,

Now with me I will beare;[\[560\]](#)

For I will away to Barnèsdale,

To see how my men doe fare.

Robin Hood sett Guyes home to his mouth,185

And a loud blast in it did blow.

That beheard the sheriffe of Nottingham,

As he leaned under a lowe.[\[561\]](#)

Hearken, hearken, sayd the sheriffe,

I heare nowe tydings good,190

For yonder I heare sir Guyes horne blowe,

And he hath slaine Robin Hoode.

Yonder I heare sir Guyes horne blowe,

Itt blowes soe well in tyde,

And yonder comes that wightye yeoman,195

Cladd in his capull hyde.

[Pg 115]

Come hyther, come hyther, thou good sir Guy,

Aske what thou wilt of mee.

O I will none of thy gold, sayd Robin,[\[562\]](#)

Nor I will none of thy fee:200

But now I have slaine the master, he sayes,

Let me go strike the knave;

This is all the rewarde I aske;

Nor noe other will I have.

Thou art a madman, said the sheriffe,205

Thou sholdest have had a knights fee:

But seeing thy asking hath beene soe bad,

Well granted it shale be.

When Litle John heard his master speake,

Well knewe he it was his steven:[\[563\]](#)210

Now shall I be looset, quoth Litle John,

With Christ his might in heaven.

Fast Robin hee hyed him to Little John,

He thought to loose him belive;[\[564\]](#)

The sheriffe and all his companye215

Fast after him did drive.

Stand abacke, stand abacke, sayd Robin;

Why draw you mee soe neere?

Itt was never the use in our countryè,
Ones shrift another shold heere.220

But Robin pulled forth an Irysh kniffe,
And losed John hand and foote,
And gave him sir Guyes bow into his hand,
And bade it be his boote.[\[565\]](#)

[Pg 116]

Then John he took Guyes bow in his hand,[\[566\]](#)225
His boltes and arrowes eche one:
When the sheriffe saw Little John bend his bow,
He fettled him to be gone.

Towards his house in Nottingham towne,[\[567\]](#)
He fled full fast away;230
And soe did all his companye:
Not one behind wold stay.

But he cold neither runne soe fast,[\[568\]](#)
Nor away soe fast cold ryde,[\[568\]](#)
But Litle John with an arrowe soe broad,[\[568\]](#)235
He shott him into the 'backe'-syde.[\[568\]](#)

* The title of *Sir* was not formerly peculiar to knights, it was given to priests, and sometimes to very inferior personages.

Dr. Johnson thinks this title was applied to such as had taken the degree of A. B. in the universities, who are still stiled, *Domini*, "Sirs," to distinguish them from Undergraduates, who have no prefix, and from Masters of Arts, who are stiled *Magistri*, "Masters."

[Pg 117]



IX.

AN ELEGY ON HENRY FOURTH EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND.



The subject of this poem, which was written by *Skelton*, is the death of *Henry Percy*, fourth earl of Northumberland, who fell a victim to the avarice of Henry VII. In 1489 the parliament had granted the king a subsidy for carrying on the war in Bretagne. This tax was found so heavy in the North, that the whole country was in a flame. The E. of Northumberland, then lord lieutenant for Yorkshire, wrote to inform the king of the discontent, and praying an abatement. But nothing is so

unrelenting as avarice: the king wrote back that not a penny should be abated. This message being delivered by the earl with too little caution, the populace rose, and, supposing him to be the promoter of their calamity, broke into his house, and murdered him, with several of his attendants, who yet are charged by Skelton with being backward in their duty on this occasion. This melancholy event happened at the earl's seat at Cocklodge, near Thirske, in Yorkshire, April 28, 1489. See Lord Bacon, &c.

If the reader does not find much poetical merit in this old poem (which yet is one of Skelton's best), he will see a striking picture of the state and magnificence kept up by our ancient nobility during the feudal times. This great earl is described here as having, among his menial servants, *knights, squires*, and even *barons*: see v. 32. 183. &c. which, however different from modern manners, was formerly not unusual with our greater barons, whose castles had all the splendour and offices of a royal court before the laws against retainers abridged and limited the number of their attendants.

John Skelton, who commonly styled himself Poet Laureat, died June 21, 1529. The following poem, which appears to have been written soon after the event, is printed from an ancient MS. copy preserved in the British Museum, being much more correct than that printed among *Skelton's Poems* in bl. let. 12mo. 1568.—It is addressed to Henry Percy, fifth earl of Northumberland, and is prefaced, &c. in the following manner:

[Pg 118]

Poeta Skelton Laureatus libellum suum metrice alloquitur.

Ad dominum properato meum mea pagina Percy,

Qui Northumbrorum jura paterna gerit,

Ad nutum celebris tu prona repone leonis,

Quæque suo patri tristia justa cano.

Ast ubi perlegit, dubiam sub mente volutet

Fortunam, cuncta quæ male fida rotat.

Qui leo sit felix, & Nestoris occupet annos;

Ad libitum cujus ipse paratus ero.

[Percy does not do justice to Skelton's poetical powers in the above note, as this *Elegy* is written in a style not at all characteristic of him and is also far from being one of his best poems. Skelton was one of the earliest personal satirists in our language, and he flew at high game when he attacked the powerful Wolsey with fierce invective, in his "Why come ye nat to courte?" His *Boke of Phyllyp Sparrowe* is described by Coleridge as "an exquisite and original poem," and its subject entitles him to the designation of the modern Catullus. It was very popular in his day, and the nursery rhyme of *Who killed Cock robin?* was probably paraphrased from the portion of the poem in which the funeral of the sparrow is related. Skelton was a distinguished scholar and his earlier poems are written in the serious strain of the *Elegy*, but curiously enough about the time that he took orders (1498) and became rector of Diss in Norfolk, he began to write in a more natural, frolicsome and satirical vein, and adopted the metre now known as Skeltonian. He was not very particular as to the words he used, but he does not deserve the opprobrious epithet that Pope applies to him in the couplet—

"Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learned by rote,

And beastly Skelton heads of houses quote."

Skelton graduated as poet laureate at the two Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the King allowed him to wear an appropriate decoration at court. There is a full length portrait of the poet in Brydges' *British Bibliographer* (vol. iv. p. 389), taken from one on the back of the title of *A ryght delectable tratyse upon a goodly Garlande or Chaplet of Laurell*

**SKELTON LAUREAT UPON THE DOLORUS DETHE AND MUCH LAMENTABLE CHAUNCE OF THE
MOOST HONORABLE ERLE OF NORTHUMBERLANDE.**



I wayle, I wepe, I sobbe, I sigh ful sore
The dedely fate, the dolefulle destenny
Of him that is gone, alas! withoute restore,
Of the blode[569] royall descending nobelly;
Whos lordshepe doutles was slayne lamentably5
Thorow treson ageyn[570] hym compassyd and wrought;
Trew to his prince, in word, in dede, and thought.

Of hevenly poems, O Clyo calde by name
In the college of musis goddess hystoriall,
Adres the to me, whiche am both halt and lame10
In elect uteraunce to make memoryall:
To the for soccour, to the for helpe I call
Myne homely rudnes and drighnes to expelle
With the freshe waters of Elyconys[571] welle.

Of noble actes auntyently enrolde,15
Of famous princis and lordes of astate,[572]
By thy report ar wonte to be extold,
Regestringe trewly every formare date;
[Pg 120] Of thy bountie after the usuall rate,
Kyndle in me suche plenty of thy noblès,[573]20
Thes sorrowfulle dities that I may shew expres.

In sesons past who hathe harde or sene
Of formar writinge by any presidente
That vilane hastarddis[574] in ther furious tene,[575]
Fulfyld with malice of froward entente,25
Confeterd[576] togeder of commoun concente
Falsly to slo[577] ther moste singular goode lorde?
It may be registerde of shamefull recorde.

So noble a man, so valiaunt lorde and knight,

Fulfilled with honor, as all the worlde dothe ken;30

At his commaundement, whiche had both day and night

Knyghtis and squyers, at every season when

He calde upon them, as menyall houshold men:

Were no thes commones uncurteis karlis of kynde[578]

To slo their owne lorde? God was not in their minde.35

And were not they to blame, I say also,

That were aboute hym, his owne servants of trust,

To suffre hym slayn of his mortall fo?

Fled away from hym, let hym ly in the dust:

They bode[579] not till the rekenyng were discust.40

What shuld I flatter? what shulde I glose[580] or paynt?

Fy, fy for shame, their harts wer to faint.

In Englande and Fraunce, which gretly was redouted;[581]

Of whom both Flaunders and Scotland stode in drede;

To whome grete astates obeyde and lowttede;[582]45

A mayny[583] of rude villayns made him for to blede:

Unkindly they slew hym, that holp them oft at nede:

He was their bulwark, their paves,[584] and their wall,

[Pg 121] Yet shamfully they slew hym; that shame mot[585] them befall.

I say, ye commoners, why wer ye so stark mad?50

What frantyk frensy fyll[586] in youre brayne?

Where was your wit and reson, ye shuld have had?

What willfull folly made yow to ryse agayne[587]

Your naturall lord? alas! I can not fayne.

Ye armed you with will, and left your wit behynd;55

Well may you be called comones most unkynd.

He was your chyfteyne, your shelde, your chef defence,

Redy to assyst you in every tyme of nede:

Your worship[588] depended of his excellence:

Alas! ye mad men, to far ye did excede:60

Your hap was unhappy, to ill was your spede:

What movyd you agayn hym to war or to fight?

What aylde you to sle your lord agyn all right?

The grounde of his quarel was for his sovereyn lord,

The welle concernyng of all the hole lande,65

Demaundyng soche dutyes as nedis most acord

To the right of his prince which shold not be withstand;

For whos cause ye slew hym with your awne hande:

But had his nobill men done wel that day,

Ye had not been hable to have saide him nay.70

But ther was fals packinge,[\[589\]](#) or els I am begylde:
How-be-it the matter was evident and playne,
For yf they had occupied[\[590\]](#) ther spere and ther shelde,
This noble man doutles had not be slayne.
Bot men say they wer lynked with a double chayn,⁷⁵
And held with the commouns under a cloke,
Whiche kindeled the wyld fyre that made all this smoke.
[Pg 122]

The commouns renyed[\[591\]](#) ther taxes to pay
Of them demaunded and asked by the kinge;
With one voice importune, they playnly said nay:⁸⁰
They buskt them on a bushment[\[592\]](#) themself in baile[\[593\]](#) to bringe:
Agayne the kings plesure to wrastle or to wringe,[\[594\]](#)
Bluntly as bestis withe boste[\[595\]](#) and with cry
They saide, they forsede[\[596\]](#) not, nor carede not to dy.
The noblenes of the northe this valiant lorde and knyght,⁸⁵
As man that was innocent of trechery or trayne,
Presed forthe boldly to witstand the myght,
And, lyke marciall Hector, he fauht them agayne,
Vigorously upon them with myght and with mayne,
Trustinge in noble men that wer with hym there:⁹⁰
Bot all they fled from hym for falshode or fere.

Barons, knights, squyers, one and alle,
Togeder with servaunts of his famuly,
Turnid their backis, and let ther master fall,
Of whos [life] they counted not a flye;⁹⁵
Take up whos wolde for them, they let hym ly.
Alas! his golde, his fee, his annuall rente
Upon suche a sort[\[597\]](#) was ille bestowde and spent.

He was envyrond aboute on every syde
Withe his enemys, that were stark mad and wode;[\[598\]](#)¹⁰⁰
Yet whils he stode he gave them woundes wyde:
Alas for routhe![\[599\]](#) what thouche his mynde were goode,
His corage manly, yet ther he shed his bloode!
All left alone, alas! he fawte in vayne;
For cruelly amonge them ther he was slayne.¹⁰⁵
[Pg 123]

Alas for pite! that Percy thus was spylyt,[\[600\]](#)
The famous erle of Northumberlande:
Of knightly prowès the sworde pomel and hylt,
The myghty lyoun[\[601\]](#) doutted[\[602\]](#) by se and lande!

O dolorous chaunce of fortunes fruward hande!110
What man remembring how shamfully he was slayne,
From bitter weepinge hymself kan restrayne?
O cruell Mars, thou dedly god of war!
O dolorous teusday, dedicate to thy name,
When thou shoke thy sworde so noble a man to mar!115
O grounde ungracious, unhappy be thy fame,
Whiche wert endyed with rede blode of the same!
Moste noble erle! O fowle mysuryd[603] grounde
Whereon he gat his fynal dedely wounde!
O Atropos, of the fatall systers thre,120
Goddess mooste cruell unto the lyf of man,
All merciles, in the ys no pitè!
O homycide, whiche sleest[604] all that thou kan,
So forcibly upon this erle thou ran,
That with thy sworde enharpid[605] of mortall drede,125
Thou kit[606] asonder his perfight[607] vitall threde!
My wordis unpullysht be nakide and playne,
Of aureat[608] poems they want ellumynyng;[609]
Bot by them to knowlege ye may attayne
Of this lordis dethe and of his murtheryng.130
Which whils he lyvyd had fuyson[610] of every thing,
Of knights, of squyers, chef lord of toure and toune,
Tyl fykkill[611] fortune began on hym to frowne.
[Pg 124]
Paregall[612] to dukis, with kings he myght compare,
Surmountinge in honor all erls he did excede,135
To all cuntreis aboute hym reporte[613] me I dare.
Lyke to Eneas benygne in worde and dede,
Valiaunt as Hector in every marciall nede,
Provydent, discrete, circumspect, and wyse,139
Tyll the chaunce ran agyne him of fortunes duble dyse.
What nedethe me for to extoll his fame
With my rude pen enkankerd all with rust?
Whos noble actis shew worsheply his name,
Transcendyng far myne homely muse, that must
Yet sumwhat wright supprised with hartly lust,[614]145
Truly reportinge his right noble astate,
Immortally whiche is immaculate.
His noble blode never disteynynd was,
Trew to his prince for to defende his right,

Doublenes hatinge, fals maters to compas,150
Treytory[\[615\]](#) and treson he bannesht out of syght,
With trowth to medle was all his hole delyght,
As all his kuntrey kan testefy the same:
To slo suche a lord, alas, it was grete shame.

If the hole quere[\[616\]](#) of the musis nyne155
In me all onely wer sett and comprisyde,
Enbrethed with the blast of influence dyvyne,
As perfightly as could be thought or devysyd;
To me also allthouche it were promysyde
Of laureat Phebus holy the eloquence,160
All were to litill for his magnyficence.

O yonge lyon, bot tender yet of age,[\[617\]](#)
Grow and encrese, remembre thyn astate,
God the assyst unto thyn herytage,
And geve the grace to be more fortunate,165
[Pg 125] Agayne rebellyouns arme to make debate.
And, as the lyoune, whiche is of bestis kinge,
Unto thy subjectis be kurteis and benyngne.

I pray God sende the prosperous lyf and long,
Stabille thy mynde constant to be and fast,170
Right to mayntein, and to resist all wronge:
All flattringe faytors[\[618\]](#) abhor and from the cast,
Of foule detraction God kepe the from the blast:
Let double delinge in the have no place,
And be not light of credence in no case.175

Wythe hevy chere, with dolorous hart and mynd,
Eche man may sorrow in his inward thought,
Thys lords death, whose pere is hard to fynd
Allgyf[\[619\]](#) Englund and Fraunce were thorow saught.
Al kings, all princes, all dukes, well they ought180
Bothe temporall and spirituall for to complayne
This noble man, that crewelly was slayne.

More specially barons, and those knyghtes bold,
And all other gentilmen with hym enterteynd
In fee, as menyall men of his housold,185
Whom he as lord worsheply manteynd:
To sorowfull weping they ought to be constreynd,
As oft as thei call to ther remembraunce,
Of ther good lord the fate and dedely chaunce.

O perlese prince of hevyn emperyalle,190

That with one worde formed al thing of noughte;
Hevyn, hell, and erth obey unto thi kall;
Which to thy resemblance wondersly hast wrought
All mankynd, whom thou full dere hast boght,
With thy blode precious our finaunce[\[620\]](#) thou dyd pay,195
And us redemed, from the fendys pray;[\[621\]](#)
[Pg 126]

To the pray we, as prince incomperable,
As thou art of mercy and pite the well,
Thou bringe unto thy joye etermynable[\[622\]](#)
The sowle of this lorde from all daunger of hell,200
In endles blis with the to byde and dwell
In thy palace above the orient,
Where thou art lorde, and God omnipotent.

O quene of mercy, O lady full of grace,
Maiden moste pure, and goddis moder dere,205
To sorowfull harts chef comfort and solace,
Of all women O floure withouten pere,
Pray to thy son above the starris clere,
He to vouchesaf by thy mediatioun
To pardon thy servant, and bringe to salvacion.210
In joy triumphaunt the heavenly yerarchy,[\[623\]](#)
With all the hole sorte[\[624\]](#) of that glorious place,
His soule mot[\[625\]](#) receyve into ther company
Thorowe bounte of hym that formed all solace:
Well of pite, of mercy, and of grace,215
The father, the son, and the holy goste
In Trinite one God of myghts moste.

†† I have placed the foregoing poem of *Skelton's* before the following extract from *Hawes*, not only because it was written first, but because I think *Skelton* is in general to be considered as the earlier poet; many of his poems being written long before *Hawes's Graunde Amour*.

[Pg 127]

X. THE TOWER OF DOCTRINE.



The reader has here a specimen of the descriptive powers of *Stephen Hawes*, a celebrated poet in the reign of Hen. VII.

tho' now little known. It is extracted from an allegorical poem of his (written in 1505.) intituled, *The History of Graunde Amoure and La Bel Pucell, called the Pastime of Pleasure, &c.* 4to. 1555. See more of Hawes in *Ath. Ox.* v. 1. p. 6. and Warton's *Observ.* v. 2. p. 105. He was also author of a book, intituled, *The Temple of Glass. Wrote by Stephen Hawes, gentleman of the bedchamber to K. Henry VII.* Pr. for Caxton, 4to. no date.

The following Stanzas are taken from Chap. III. and IV. of the Hist. above-mentioned. "How Fame departed from Graunde Amoure and left him with Governauce and Grace, and how he went to the Tower of Doctrine, &c."—As we are able to give no small lyric piece of Hawes's, the reader will excuse the insertion of this extract.

[Most readers will probably be satisfied with the seventy-four lines that Percy has extracted from Hawes's long didactic poem, but those who wish to read the whole will find it reprinted by Mr. Thomas Wright in the fifteenth volume of the Percy Society's publications. The account of Rhetorick and the other allegorical nullities is weary reading, but the chapter in commendation of Gower, Chaucer and the author's master Lydgate, "the chefe orygynall of my lernyng," is interesting from a literary point of view. The poem was very popular in its own day and passed through several editions, and it has found admirers among critics of a later age. The Rev. Dr. Hodgson in a letter to Percy, dated Sept. 22, 1800,[\[626\]](#) speaks of it in very extravagant terms, and regrets that it had not then found an editor, as he regarded it "as one of the finest poems in our own or any other language." Warton describes Hawes as the only writer deserving the name of a poet in the reign of Henry VII. and says that "this poem contains no common touches of romantic and allegoric fiction." Mr. Wright however looks at it as "one of those allegorical writings which were popular with our forefathers, but which can now only be looked upon as monuments of the bad taste [Pg 128]of a bad age." Hawes was a native of Suffolk, but the dates of his birth and death are not known. He studied in the University of Oxford and afterwards travelled much, becoming "a complete master of the French and Italian poetry."]

Cap. III.



* * * *

I loked about and saw a craggy roche,
Farre in the west, neare to the element,
And as I dyd then unto it approche,
Upon the toppe I sawe refulgent
The royal tower of Morall Document,⁵
Made of fine copper with turrets fayre and hye,
Which against Phebus shone so marveyulously,
That for the very perfect bryghtnes
What of the tower, and of the cleare sunne,
I could nothyng behold the goodlines¹⁰
Of that palaice, whereas Doctrine did wonne:[\[627\]](#)
Tyll at the last, with mysty wyndes donne,
The radiant bryghtnes of golden Phebus
Auster gan cover with clowde tenebrus.[\[628\]](#)

Then to the tower I drewe nere and nere,15
And often mused of the great hyghnes
Of the craggy rocke, which quadrant did appeare:
But the fayre tower, so much of ryches
Was all about, sexangled doubtles;
Gargeyld[\[629\]](#) with grayhoundes, and with manylyons,20
Made of fyne golde; with divers sundry dragons.[\[630\]](#)
[Pg 129]

The little turrets with ymages of golde
About was set, whiche with the wynde aye moved.
Wyth propre vices,[\[631\]](#) the I did well beholde
About the towers, in sundry wyse they hoved[\[632\]](#)25
With goodly pypes, in their mouthes i-tuned,
That with the wynde they pyped a daunce,
I-clipped[\[633\]](#) *Amour de la hault plesaunce*.
Cap. IV.

The toure was great and of marvelous wydnes,
To whyche ther was no way to passe but one,30
Into the toure for to have an intres:[\[634\]](#)
A grece[\[635\]](#) there was y-chesyld all of stone
Out of the rocke, on whyche men dyd gone
Up to the toure, and in lykewyse dyd I
Wyth bothe the Grayhoundes in my company:[\[636\]](#)35

Tyll that I came unto a ryall gate,
Where I sawe stondynge the goodly Portres,
Whiche axed me, from whence I came a-late?
To whome I gan in every thyng expresse
All myne adventure, chaunce, and busynesse,40
And eke my name; I tolde her every dell:
Whan she herde this, she lyked me right well.

Her name, she sayd, was called Countenaunce;
Into the besy[\[637\]](#) courte she dyd me then lede,
Where was a fountayne depured[\[638\]](#) of pleasance,45
A noble sprynge, a ryall conduyte hede,
Made of fyne golde enameled with reed;
And on the toppe four dragons blewe and stoute
Thys dulcet water in foure partyes dyd spout.
[Pg 130]

Of whyche there flowed foure ryvers ryght clere,50
Sweter than Nylus[\[639\]](#) or Ganges was theyr odoure;
Tygrys or Eufrates unto them no pere:

I dyd than taste the aromatyke lycoure,
Fragraunt of fume, swete as any floure;
And in my mouthe it had a marveyulous cent[640]55
Of divers spyces, I knewe not what it ment.

And after thys farther forth me brought
Dame Countenaunce into a goodly Hall,
Of jasper stones it was wonderly wrought:
The wyndowes cleare depured all of crystall,60
And in the roufe on hye over all
Of golde was made a ryght crafty vyne;
In stede of grapes the rubies there did shyne.

The flore was paved with berall clarified,
With pillers made of stones precious,65
Like a place of pleasure so gayely glorified,
It myght be called a palaice glorious,
So muche delectable and solacious;[641]
The hall was hanged hye and circuler
With cloth of arras in the rychest maner.70

That treated well of a ful noble story,
Of the doubty waye to the Tower Perillous;[642]
Howe a noble knyght should wynne the victory
Of many a serpente fowle and odious.
* * * *

[Pg 131]

XI. THE CHILD OF ELLE,



Is given from a fragment in the Editor's folio MS. which, tho' extremely defective and mutilated, appeared to have so much merit, that it excited a strong desire to attempt a completion of the story. The Reader will easily discover the supplemental stanzas by their inferiority, and at the same time be inclined to pardon it, when he considers how difficult it must be to imitate the affecting simplicity and artless beauties of the original.

Child was a title sometimes given to a knight.

[The *Child of Ell*, as it appears in the folio MS., is a fragment without beginning or ending, so that Percy was forced to add some verses in order to fit it for his book, but the above note does not give any adequate notion of his contributions to the ballad. The verses that are entirely due to the bishop's pen are placed between brackets, and it will be seen from the copy

of the original printed at the end that the remaining thirty lines are much altered from it. It is unfortunate that Percy's taste was not sufficient to save him from adding sentimental verses so out of character with the directness of the original as—

"Fair Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe:
At length he seized her lilly-white hand,
And downe the ladder he drewe."

On the other hand, the poem as it stands is certainly elegant, and Sir Walter Scott was justified in his high praise when he pointed out the beauty of verses 181-184.

"The baron he stroked his dark brown cheek,
And turned his head aside
To wipe away the starting tear,
He proudly strave to hide."

Scott published a ballad called "Erlinton" for the first time in his *Border Minstrelsy*, which he says "seems to be the rude original, or perhaps a corrupt and imperfect copy of *The Child of Elle*."

The original fragment from the MS. is worth reading for its own sake as a genuine antique, which must outweigh in interest all manufactured imitations.]

[Pg 132]



[On yonder hill a castle standes
With walles and towres bedight,[\[643\]](#)
And yonder lives the Child of Elle,
A younge and comely knighte.

The Child of Elle to his garden wente,⁵
And stood at his garden pale,
Whan, lo! he beheld fair Emmelines page
Come trippinge downe the dale.

The Child of Elle he hyed him thence,
Y-wis he stoode not stille,¹⁰
And soone he mette faire Emmelines page
Come climbing up the hille.

Nowe Christe thee save, thou little foot-page,
Now Christe thee save and see!
Oh telle me how does thy ladye gaye,¹⁵
And what may thy tydinges bee?

My lady shee is all woe-begone,

And the teares they falle from her eyne;
And aye she laments the deadlye feude
Betweene her house and thine.20

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 shee sends thee a ring of golde25
The last boone thou mayst have,
And biddes thee weare it for her sake,
Whan she is layde in grave.

[Pg 133]

For, ah! her gentle heart is broke,
And in grave soone must shee bee,30
Sith her father hath chose her a new new love,
And forbidde her to think of thee.

Her father hath brought her a carlish[\[644\]](#) knight,
Sir John of the north countràye,
And within three dayes shee must him wedde,35
Or he vowes he will her slaye.

Nowe hye thee backe, thou little foot-page,
And greet thy ladye from mee,
And telle her that I her owne true love
Will dye, or sette her free.40

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

The boye he tripped, the boye he ranne,45
He neither stint ne stayd
Untill he came to fair Emmelines bowre,
Whan kneeling downe he sayd,

O ladye, I've been with thy own true love,
And he greets thee well by mee;50
This night will he bee at thy bowre-windòwe,
And dye or sette thee free.

Nowe daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the ladye Emmeline,55

Who sate in her bowre to weepe:

And soone shee heard her true loves voice

Lowe whispering at the walle,

Awake, awake, my deare ladyè,

[Pg 134] Tis I thy true love call.60

Awake, awake, my ladye deare,

Come, mount this faire palfràye:

This ladder of ropes will lette thee downe,

Ile carrye thee hence awaye.

Nowe nay, nowe nay, thou gentle knight,65

Nowe nay, this may not bee;

For aye shold I tint my maiden fame,

If alone I should wend with thee.

O ladye, thou with a knighte so true

Mayst safelye wend alone,70

To my ladye mother I will thee bringe,

Where marriage shall make us one.

"My father he is a baron bolde,

Of lynage proude and hye;

And what would he saye if his daughtèr75

Awaye with a knight should fly?

Ah! well I wot, he never would rest,]

Nor his meate should doe him no goode,

Until he had slayne thee, Child of Elle,

And seene thy deare hearts bloode."80

O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,

And a little space him fro,

I would not care for thy cruel fathèr,

Nor the worst that he could doe.

O ladye, wert thou in thy saddle sette,85

And once without this walle,

I would not care for thy cruel fathèr,

Nor the worst that might befalle.

[Faire Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,

And aye her heart was woe:90

[Pg 135] At length he seized her lilly-white hand,

And downe the ladder he drewe:

And thrice he clasped her to his breste,

And kist her tenderliè:

The teares that fell from her fair eyes,95
Ranne like the fountayne free.]

Hee mounted himselfe on his steede so talle,
And her on a fair palfraye,
And slung his bugle about his necke,
And roundlye they rode awaye.100

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

Awake, awake, thou baron bolde!105
Awake, my noble dame!
Your daughter is fledde with the Child of Elle,
To doe the deede of shame.

The baron he woke, the baron he rose,
And called his merrie men all:110
"And come thou forth, Sir John the knighte,
Thy ladye is carried to thrall."[\[645\]](#)]

Faire Emmeline scant had ridden a mile,
A mile forth of the towne,
When she was aware of her fathers men115
Come galloping over the downe:

[And foremost came the carlish knight,
Sir John of the north countraye:
"Nowe stop, nowe stop, thou false traitoure,
Nor carry that ladye awaye.120
[\[Pg 136\]](#)

For she is come of hye lineage,
And was of a ladye borne,
And ill it beseems thee a false churl's sonne
To carrye her hence to scorne."]

Nowe loud thou lvest, Sir John the knight,125
Nowe thou doest lye of mee;
A knight mee gott, and a ladye me bore,
Soe never did none by thee.

But light nowe downe, my ladye faire,
Light downe, and hold my steed,130
While I and this discourteous knighte
Doe trye this arduous deede.

But light now downe, my deare ladyè,
Light downe, and hold my horse;
While I and this discourteous knight¹³⁵
[Doe trye our valour's force.

Fair Emmeline sighed, fair Emmeline wept,
And aye her heart was woe,
While twixt her love and the carlish knight
Past many a baleful blowe.¹⁴⁰

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

And nowe the baron, and all his men¹⁴⁵
Full fast approached nye:
Ah! what may ladye Emmeline doe?
Twere nowe no boote^[646] to flye.

Her lover he put his horne to his mouth,
And blew both loud and shrill,¹⁵⁰
And soone he saw his owne merry men
Come ryding over the hill.
[Pg 137]

"Nowe hold thy hand, thou bold baròn,
I pray thee hold thy hand,
Nor ruthless rend two gentle hearts,¹⁵⁵
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 sayd wee may.¹⁶⁰

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

My mother she was an earl's daughtèr,¹⁶⁵
And a noble knyght my sire——
The baron he frowned, and turn'd away
With mickle dole and ire."

Fair Emmeline sighed, faire Emmeline wept,
And did all trembling stand:¹⁷⁰

At lengthe she sprang upon her knee.

And held his lifted hand.

Pardon, my lorde and father deare,

This faire yong knyght and mee:

Trust me, but for the carlish knyght,¹⁷⁵

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.¹⁸⁰

The baron he stroakt his dark-brown cheeke,

And turned his heade asyde

To whipe awaye the starting teare,

He proudly strave to hyde.

[Pg 138]

In deepe revolving thought he stooode,¹⁸⁵

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;¹⁹⁰

Here take my deare and only child,

And with her half my land:

Thy father once mine honour wrongde

In dayes of youthful pride;

Do thou the injurye repayre¹⁹⁵

In fondnesse for thy bride.

And as thou love her, and hold her deare,

Heaven prosper thee and thine:

And nowe my blessing wend wi' thee,

My lovelye Emmeline.]²⁰⁰

✻

††† From the word *kirke* in ver. 159, this hath been thought to be a Scottish Ballad, but it must be acknowledged that the line referred to is among the additions supplied by the Editor: besides, in the Northern counties of England, *kirk* is used in the common dialect for *church*, as well as beyond the Tweed.

[The following thirty-nine lines are the whole of the fragment which Percy used as the groundwork of his poem. They are taken from *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript*, vol. i. p. 133.

Sayes, Christ thee save, good child of Ell!

Christ saue thee and thy steede!

My father sayes he will noe meate,
Nor his drinke shall doe him noe good,
till he have slaine the Child of Ell
And have seene his harts blood.

I wold I were in my sadle sett,
And a mile out of the towne,
I did not care for your father
And all his merry men!

[Pg 139]

I wold I were in my sadle sett,
And a little space him froe,
I did not care for your father
And all that long him to!

He leaned ore his saddle bow
To kisse this Lady good;
The teares that went them two betweene
Were blend water and blood.

He sett himselfe on one good steed
This lady of one palfray
And sett his litle horne to his mouth
And roundlie he rode away.

He had not ridden past a mile
A mile out of the towne,
Her father was readye with her seven brether
He said, sett thou my daughter downe!
For itt ill beseemes thee, thou false churles sonne,
To carry her forth of this towne!

But lowd thou lvest, Sir John the Knight!
That now doest lye of me;
A knight me gott and a lady me bore;
Soe never did none by thee.

But light now downe, my lady gay,
Light downe and hold my horsse
Whilest I and your father and your brether
Doe play us at this crosse;

But light now downe, my owne trew loue,
And meeklye hold my steede,
Whilest your father [and your brether] bold.]



XII.

EDOM O' GORDON,

A Scottish Ballad,



Was printed at Glasgow, by Robert and Andrew Foulis, MDCCLV. 8vo. 12 pages. We are indebted for its publication (with many other valuable things in these volumes) to Sir David Dalrymple, Bart., who gave it as it was preserved in the memory of a lady that is now dead.

The reader will here find it improved and enlarged with several fine stanzas, recovered from a fragment of the same ballad, in the Editor's folio MS. It is remarkable that the latter is entitled *Captain Adam Carre*, and is in the English idiom. But whether the author was English or Scotch, the difference originally was not great. The English Ballads are generally of the North of England, the Scottish are of the South of Scotland, and of consequence the country of ballad-singers was sometimes subject to one crown, and sometimes to the other, and most frequently to neither. Most of the finest old Scotch songs have the scene laid within twenty miles of England, which is indeed all poetic ground, green hills, remains of woods, clear brooks. The pastoral scenes remain: of the rude chivalry of former ages happily nothing remains but the ruins of the castles, where the more daring and successful robbers resided. The house or castle of the *Rodes* stood about a measured mile south from Duns, in Berwickshire: some of the ruins of it may be seen to this day. The *Gordons* were anciently seated in the same county: the two villages of East and West Gordon lie about ten miles from the castle of the *Rodes*.[\[647\]](#) The fact, however, on which the ballad is founded, happened in the north of Scotland,[\[648\]](#) [\[Pg 141\]](#) yet it is but too faithful a specimen of the violences practised in the feudal times in every part of this Island, and indeed all over Europe.

From the different titles of this ballad, it should seem that the old strolling bards or minstrels (who gained a livelihood by reciting these poems) made no scruple of changing the names of the personages they introduced, to humour their hearers. For instance, if a Gordon's conduct was blameworthy in the opinion of that age, the obsequious minstrel would, when among Gordons, change the name to Car, whose clan or sept lay further west, and *vice versâ*. The foregoing observation, which I owed to Sir David Dalrymple, will appear the more perfectly well founded, if, as I have since been informed (from *Crawford's Memoirs*), the principal Commander of the expedition was a *Gordon*, and the immediate agent a *Car*, or *Ker*; for then the reciter might, upon good grounds, impute the barbarity here deplored, either to a Gordon or a Car, as best suited his purpose. In the third volume the reader will find a similar instance. See the song of *Gil Morris*, wherein the principal character introduced had different names given him, perhaps from the same cause.

It may be proper to mention that, in the folio MS., instead of the "Castle of the Rodes," it is the "Castle of Bittons-

borrow," and also "Dractons-borrow," and "Capt. Adam Carre" is called the "Lord of Westerton-town." Uniformity required that the additional stanzas supplied from that copy should be clothed in the Scottish orthography and idiom: this has therefore been attempted, though perhaps imperfectly.

[Percy's note, which goes to prove that the historical event referred to in this ballad occurred in the north of Scotland, negatives the view which is expressed just before, that the borders are the [Pg 142]exclusive country of the ballad singers, at all events in this particular instance. Sir David Dalrymple appears to have altered the place of action from Towie to Rodes under a misconception. An extract from *Crawford's Memoirs* (an. 1571, p. 240, ed. 1706), is a proper companion to the passage from Spotswood, and explains the title in the folio MS. The person sent was "one Captain Ker with a party of foot.... Nor was he ever so much as cashiered for this inhuman action, which made Gordon share in the scandal and the guilt." Gordon, in his *History of the Family of Gordon*, informs us that, in the true old spirit of Scottish family feuds, the Forbes's afterwards attempted to assassinate Gordon in the streets of Paris.

Percy showed good taste in rejecting the termination given in Dalrymple's version, which certainly does not improve the ballad, and has moreover a very modern flavour. The husband is there made to end his days as follows:—

"And round and round the wa's he went
Their ashes for to view.
At last into the flames he flew
And bad the world adieu."

This ballad is found in various versions, which proves how wide-spread was the popularity of the striking story which it relates. In the version given from the Cotton MS. by Ritson in his *Ancient Songs* (vol. ii. p. 38, ed. 1829) the husband takes no vengeance on Captain Car. Another version, entitled *Loudoun Castle*, is reprinted in *Child's English and Scottish Ballads* (vol. vi. p. 254), from the *Ballads and Songs of Ayrshire*, where the scene is changed to Loudoun Castle, which is supposed to have been burnt about three hundred and sixty years ago by the clan Kennedy. In Ritson's version the castle is called Crechcrynbroghe, and in the *Genealogy of the Forbes*, by Matthew Lumsden, of Tullikerne, written in 1580 (Inverness, 1819, p. 44), the name is changed to Cargaffe. From this latter source we learn that the lady of Towie was Margaret Campbell, daughter of Sir John Campbell, of Calder, and that the husband, far from flying into the flames, married a second wife, a daughter of Forbes of Reires, who bare him a son named Arthur.]

[Pg 143]



It fell about the Martinmas,
Quhen the wind blew shril and cauld,
Said Edom o' Gordon to his men,
We maun draw till a hauld.[\[649\]](#)

And quhat a hauld sall we draw till,5

My mirry men and me?

We wul gae to the house o' the Rodes,

To see that fair ladie.

The lady stude on hir castle wa',

Beheld baith dale and down:10

There she was ware of a host of men

Cum ryding towards the toun.[\[650\]](#)

O see ye nat, my mirry men a'?

O see ye nat quhat I see?

Methinks I see a host of men:15

I marveil quha they be.

She weend[\[651\]](#) it had been hir luvely lord,

As he cam ryding hame;

It was the traitor Edom o' Gordon,

Quha reckt nae sin nor shame.20

She had nae sooner buskit[\[652\]](#) hirsell,

And putten on hir gown,

But Edom o' Gordon and his men

Were round about the toun.

They had nae sooner supper sett,25

Nae sooner said the grace,

But Edom o' Gordon and his men,

Were light about the place.

[Pg 144]

The lady ran up to hir towir head,

Sa fast as she could hie,30

To see if by hir fair speechès

She could wi' him agree.

But quhan he see this lady saif,

And hir yates[\[653\]](#) all locked fast,

He fell into a rage of wrath,35

And his look was all aghast.

Cum down to me, ye lady gay,

Cum down, cum down to me:

This night sall ye lig[\[654\]](#) within mine armes,

To-morrow my bride sall be.40

I winnae[\[655\]](#) cum down, ye fals Gordòn,

I winnae cum down to thee;

I winnae forsake my ain dear lord,
That is sae far frae me.

Give owre your house, ye lady fair,45
Give owre your house to me,
Or I sall brenn[656] yoursel therein,
Bot and[657] your babies three.

I winnae give owre, ye false Gordòn,
To nae sik traitor as yee;50
And if ye brenn my ain dear babes,
My lord sall make ye drie.[658]

But reach my pistoll, Glaud, my man,[659]
And charge ye weil my gun:[659]
For, but an[660] I pierce that bluidy butcher,55
My babes we been undone.

She stude upon hir castle wa',
And let twa bullets flee:[659]
She mist that bluidy butchers hart,
[Pg 145] And only raz'd his knee.60

Set fire to the house, quo' fals Gordòn,
All wood wi' dule[661] and ire:
Fals lady, ye sail rue this deid,
As ye bren in the fire.

Wae worth,[662] wae worth ye, Jock my man,65
I paid ye weil your fee;
Quhy pu' ye out the ground-wa' stane.[663]
Lets in the reek[664] to me?

And ein[665] wae worth ye, Jock my man,
I paid ye weil your hire;70
Quhy pu' ye out the ground-wa stane,
To me lets in the fire?

Ye paid me weil my hire, lady;
Ye paid me weil my fee:
But now I'm Edom o' Gordons man,75
Maun either doe or die.

O than bespaik hir little son,
Sate on the nurses knee:
Sayes, Mither deare, gi' owre this house,
For the reek it smithers me.80

I wad gie a' my gowd,[666] my childe,

Sae wald I a' my fee,
For ane blast o' the western wind,
To blaw the reek frae thee.

O then bespaik hir dochter dear,⁸⁵
She was baith jimp^[667] and sma:
O row^[668] me in a pair o' sheits,
And tow me^[669] owre the wa.

[Pg 146]

They rowd hir in a pair o' sheits,
And towd hir owre the wa:⁹⁰
But on the point of Gordons spear,
She gat a deadly fa.

O bonnie bonnie was hir mouth,
And cherry were hir cheiks,
And clear clear was hir yellow hair,⁹⁵
Whereon the reid bluid dreips.

Then wi' his spear he turnd hir owre,
O gin hir face was wan!^[670]
He sayd, ye are the first that eir
I wisht alive again.¹⁰⁰

He turnd hir owre and owre againe,
O gin hir skin was whyte!^[670]
I might ha spared that bonnie face
To hae been sum mans delyte.

Busk and boun,^[671] my merry men a',¹⁰⁵
For ill dooms I doe guess;
I cannae luik in that bonnie face,
As it lyes on the grass.

Thame, luiks to freits, my master deir,^[672]
Then freits wil follow thame:^[672]¹¹⁰
Let it neir be said brave Edom o' Gordon
Was daunted by a dame.

But quhen the ladye see the fire
Cum flaming owre hir head,
She wept and kist her children twain,¹¹⁵
Sayd, Bairns, we been but dead.

[Pg 147]

The Gordon then his bougill^[673] blew,
And said, Awa', awa';

This house o' the Rodes is a' in flame,
I hauld it time to ga'.120

O then bespyed hir ain dear lord,
As hee cam ovr the lee;
He sied[\[674\]](#) his castle all in blaze
Sa far as he could see.

Then sair, O sair his mind misgave,125
And all his hart was wae;
Put on, put on, my wighty men,
So fast as ye can gae.

Put on, put on, my wighty[\[675\]](#) men,
Sa fast as ye can drie;[\[676\]](#)130
For he that is hindmost of the thrang,
Sall neir get guid o' me.

Than sum they rade, and sum they rin,
Fou fast out-owr the bent;[\[677\]](#)
But eir the foremost could get up,135
Baith lady and babes were brent.

He wrang his hands, he rent his hair,
And wept in teenefu' muid:[\[678\]](#)
O traitors, for this cruel deid
Ye sall weep teirs o'bluid.140

And after the Gordon he is gane,
Sa fast as he might drie;[\[679\]](#)
And soon i' the Gordon's foul hartis bluid,
He's wroken[\[680\]](#) his dear ladie.

✱

[Pg 148]

[The following is the version of the ballad in the Percy Folio, which is entitled *Captaine Carre*. Bishop Percy's Folio MS., ed. J. W. Hales and F. J. Furnivall, 1867, vol. i., pp. 79-83.]

fffaith, Master, whither you will,
whereas you like the best,
Unto the castle of Bittons borrow,
and there to take your rest.

But yonder stands a Castle faire,
is made of lyme and stone,
Yonder is in it a fayre lady,
her lord is ridden and gone.

The lady stood on her castle wall,
she looked upp and downe,
She was ware of an hoast of men
came rydinge towards the towne.

See you not my merry men all,
and see you not what I doe see?
Methinks I see a hoast of men
I muse who they shold be.

She thought it had beene her lovly Lord,
he had come ryding home:
it was the traitor, Captaine Carre
the Lord of Westerton towne

They had noe sooner super sett,
and after said the grace
but the traitor Captaine Carre
was light about the place.

Give over thy house, thou lady gay
I will make thee a band [*i.e.* bond]
all night within mine armes thoust lye,
to-morrow be the heyre of my land.

Ile not give over my house, shee said
neither for ladds nor man,
nor yet for traitor Captaine Carre,
Untill my lord come home.

But reach me my pistoll pee [*i.e.* piece]
and charge you well my gunne,
Ile shoote at the bloody bucher
the lord of westerton.

[Pg 149]

She stood uppon her castle wall
and let the bulletts flee,
and where shee mist....

[*Half a page missing.*]

But then bespake the little child
that sate on the nurses knee,
saies, mother deere, give ore this house
for the smoake it smoothers me.

I wold give all my gold, my childe,
soe wold I doe all my fee,

for one blast of the westerne wind
to blow the smoke from thee.

But when shee saw the fier
came flaming ore her head,
She tooke them upp her children two
Sayes, babes we all beene dead!

But Adam then he fired the house,
a sorrowfull sight to see:
now hath he burned this lady faire
and eke her children three

Then Captain Carre he rode away,
he staid noe longer at that tide,
he thought that place it was to warme
soe neere for to abide

He calld unto his merry men all
bidd them make hast away
for we have slaine his children three
all, and his lady gay.

Word came to lovly loudon[1]
to loudon[681] wheras her lord lay,
his castle and his hall was burned
all and his lady gay.

Soe hath he done his Children three,
More dearer unto him
then either the silver or the gold
that men soe faine wold win.

But when he looket this writing on,
Lord in is hart he was woe!
saies, I will find thee, Captain Carre,
wether thou ryde or goe!

[Pg 150]

Buff yee, bowne yee, my merry men all
with tempered swords of steele,
for till I have found out Captaine Carre,
My hart it is nothing weelee.

But when he came to dractons Borrow,
soe long ere it was day,
and ther he found him, Captaine Carre;
that night he ment to stay.]

[Half a page missing.]

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

[Pg 151]



RELIQUES OF ANCIENT POETRY, ETC.

SERIES THE FIRST.

BOOK II.

**BALLADS THAT ILLUSTRATE
SHAKESPEARE.**



[Pg 152]

Our great dramatic poet having occasionally quoted many ancient ballads, and even taken the plot of one, if not more, of his plays from among them, it was judged proper to preserve as many of these as could be recovered, and, that they might be the more easily found, to exhibit them in one collective view. This Second Book is therefore set apart for the reception of such ballads as are quoted by Shakespeare, or contribute in any degree to illustrate his writings: this being the principal point in view, the candid reader will pardon the admission of some pieces that have no other kind of merit.

[Pg 153]



I.

ADAM BELL, CLYM OF THE CLOUGH, AND WILLIAM OF CLOUDESLEY,



Were three noted outlaws, whose skill in archery rendered them formerly as famous in the north of England, as Robin Hood and his fellows were in the midland counties. Their place of residence was in the forest of Englewood, not far from

Carlisle (called corruptly in the ballad Englishwood, whereas Engle, or Ingle-wood, signifies wood for firing). At what time they lived does not appear. The author of the common ballad on "The Pedigree, Education and Marriage of Robin Hood," makes them contemporary with Robin Hood's father, in order to give him the honour of beating them, viz.:

"The father of Robin a Forester was,
and he shot in a lusty long-bow,
Two north-country miles and an inch at a shot,
as the Pinder of Wakefield does know:

For he brought Adam Bell, and Clim of the Clugh,
and William a Clowdéslee,
To shoot with our Forester for forty mark;
and the Forester beat them all three."

Collect. of Old Ballads, vol. i. (1723), p. 67.

This seems to prove that they were commonly thought to have lived before the popular hero of Sherwood.

Our northern archers were not unknown to their southern countrymen: their excellence at the long-bow is often alluded to by our ancient poets. Shakespeare, in his comedy of *Much adoe about nothing*, act i., makes Benedick confirm his resolves of not yielding to love, by this protestation, "If I do, hang me in a[Pg 154] bottle like a cat,[\[682\]](#) and shoot at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and called *Adam*:" meaning *Adam Bell*, as Theobald rightly observes, who refers to one or two other passages in our old poets wherein he is mentioned. The Oxford editor has also well conjectured, that "Abraham Cupid" in *Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. sc. 1, should be "*Adam* Cupid," in allusion to our archer. Ben Jonson has mentioned *Clym o' the Clough* in his *Alchemist*, act i. sc. 2. And Sir William Davenant, in a mock poem of his, called "*The long vacation in London*," describes the Attorneys and Proctors, as making matches to meet in Finsbury fields.

"With loynes in canvas bow-case tyde:[\[683\]](#)

Where arrowes stick with mickle pride; ...

Like ghosts of *Adam Bell* and *Clymme*.

Sol sets for fear they'l shoot at him."

Works, 1673, fol. p. 291.

I have only to add further concerning the principal hero of this Ballad, that the *Bells* were noted rogues in the North so late as the time of Q. Elizabeth. See in Rymer's *Fædera*, a letter from lord William Howard to some of the officers of state, wherein he mentions them.

As for the following stanzas, which will be judged from the style, orthography, and numbers, to be of considerable antiquity, they were here given (corrected in some places by a MS. copy in the Editor's old folio) from a black-letter 4to. *Imprinted at London in Lothburye by Wyllyam Copland* (no date). That old quarto edition seems to be exactly followed in *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry, &c.* Lond. 1791,[\[684\]](#) 8vo., the variations from which that occur in the following copy, are selected from many others in the folio MS. above-mentioned, and when distinguished by the usual inverted 'comma,' have been assisted by conjecture.

In the same MS. this Ballad is followed by another, intituled *Younge Cloudeslee*, being a continuation of the present story, and reciting the adventures of Willian of Cloudesly's son: but greatly inferior to this both in merit and antiquity.

[The version here printed differs but slightly from the one in the Folio MS. (ed. Hales and Furnivall, 1868, vol. iii. p. 76), and as the latter is of no critical value it has been thought unnecessary to point out the various readings. A fragment of an older edition than Copland's mentioned above has been recovered by Mr. Payne Collier, which is attributed to the press of Wynkyn de Worde by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt.

This spirited ballad is mentioned by Laneham in his Catalogue of Captain Cox's ballads, and the various editions it has passed through, and the frequent references to it in literature, prove its great and deserved popularity.

The circumstances of the second Fit resemble closely the rescue of Robin Hood by Little John, as related in "Robin Hood and the Monk," and the incident of the shot at the apple in the third Fit bears a curious likeness to the very ancient myth which is associated with William Tell. "Allane Bell" is mentioned by Dunbar in company with Robin Hood, Guy of Gisborne, and others, which proves that in his time these names had become mere abstractions.]

PART THE FIRST.



Mery it was in the grene forest
Amonge the levès grene,
Wheras men hunt east and west
Wyth bowes and arrowes kene;
To raise the dere out of theyr denne;⁵
Suche fightes hath ofte bene sene;
As by thre yemen of the north countrèy,
By them it is I meane.

The one of them hight Adam Bel,
The other Clym of the Clough,^[685]¹⁰
The thyrd was William of Cloudesly,
An archer good ynough.

[Pg 156]

They were outlawed for venyson,
These yemen everych-one;
They swore them brethren upon a day,¹⁵
To Englyshe wood for to gone.

Now lith^[686] and lysten, gentylmen,
That of myrthes loveth to here:
Two of them were single men,
The third had a wedded fere.^[687]²⁰

Wyllyam was the wedded man,
Muche more then was hys care:
He sayde to hys brethren upon a day,
To Carleile he would fare;[\[688\]](#)
For to speke with fayre Alyce his wife,²⁵
And with hys chyldren thre.
By my trouth, sayde Adam Bel,
Not by the counsell of me:
For if ye go to Carlile, brother,
And from thys wylde wode wende,[\[689\]](#)³⁰
If that the justice may you take,
Your lyfe were at an ende.
If that I come not to-morowe, brother,
By pryme[\[690\]](#) to you agayne,
Truste you then that I am 'taken,'[\[691\]](#)³⁵
Or else that I am slayne.
He toke hys leave of hys brethren two,
And to Carlile he is gon:
There he knocked at his owne windòwe
Shortlye and anone.⁴⁰

[Pg 157]

Wher be you, fayre Alyce, he sayd,
My wife and chyldren three?
Lyghtly let in thyne owne husbànde,
Wyllyam of Cloudeslee.
Alas! then sayde fayre Alyce,⁴⁵
And syghed wonderous sore,
Thys place hath ben besette for you
Thys halfe a yere and more.
Now am I here, sayde Cloudeslee,
I would that in I were.⁵⁰
Now fetche us meate and drynke ynoughe,
And let us make good chere.
She fetched hym meate and drynke plentye,
Lyke a true wedded wyfe;
And pleased hym with that she had,⁵⁵
Whome she loved as her lyfe.
There lay an old wyfe in that place,
A lytle besyde the fyre,

Whych Wylllyam had found of charytyè

More than seven yere.60

Up she rose, and forth shee goes,

Evill mote[\[692\]](#) shee speede therfore;

For shee had sett no foote on ground

In seven yere before.

She went unto the justice hall,65

As fast as she could hye:

Thys night, shee sayd, is come to town

Wylllyam of Cloudeslyè.

Thereof the justice was full fayne,[\[693\]](#)

And so was the shirife also.70

Thou shalt not trauaile hither, dame, for nought,

[Pg 158] Thy meed thou shalt have ere thou go.

They gave to her a ryght good goune,

Of scarlate, 'and of graine':

She toke the gyft, and home she wente,75

And couched her doune agayne.

They raysed the towne of mery Carleile

In all the haste they can;

And came thronging to Wylllyames house,

As fast as they might gone.80

There they besette that good yemàn

Round about on every syde:

Wylllyam hearde great noyse of folkes,

That thither-ward fast hyed.

Alyce opened a backe wyndòwe,[\[694\]](#)85

And loked all aboute,

She was ware of the justice and shirife bothe,

Wyth a full great route.[\[695\]](#)

Alas! treason, cryed Alyce,

Ever wo may thou be!90

Goe into my chamber, my husband, she sayd,

Swete Wylllyam of Cloudeslee.

He toke hys sword and hys bucler,

Hys bow and hys chyldren thre,

And wente into hys strongest chamber,95

Where he thought surest to be.

Fayre Alyce, like a lover true,

Took a pollaxe in her hande:

Said, He shall dye that cometh in

Thys dore, whyle I may stand.100

[Pg 159]

Cloudeslee bente a right good bowe,

That was of a trusty tre,

He smot the justise on the brest,

That hys arowe burst in three.

'A' curse on his harte, saide William,105

Thys day thy cote dyd on!

If it had ben no better then myne,

It had gone nere thy bone.

Yelde the Cloudeslè, sayd the justise,

And thy bowe and thy arrowes the fro.[\[696\]](#)110

'A' curse on hys hart, sayd fair Alyce,

That my husband councelleth so.

Set fyre on the house, saide the sherife,

Syth it wyll no better be,

And brenne[\[697\]](#) we therin William, he saide,115

Hys wyfe and chyldren thre.

They fyred the house in many a place,

The fyre flew up on hye:

Alas! then cryed fayre Alice,

I se we here shall dye.120

William openyd a backe wyndòw,

That was in hys chamber hie,

And there with sheetes he did let downe

His wyfe and children three.

Have you here my treasure, sayde William,125

My wyfe and my chyldren thre:

For Christès love do them no harme,

But wreke you all on me.

Wyllyam shot so wonderous well,

Tyll hys arrowes were all agoe,130

And the fyre so fast upon hym fell,

[Pg 160] That hys bowstryng brent[\[698\]](#) in two.

The sparkles brent and fell upon

Good Wyllyam of Cloudeslè:

Than was he a wofull man, and sayde,135

Thys is a cowardes death to me.

Leever[\[699\]](#) had I, sayde Wylliam,
With my sworde in the route to renne,[\[700\]](#)
Then here among myne enemyes wode[\[701\]](#)
Thus cruelly to bren.140

He toke hys sword and hys buckler,
And among them all he ran,
Where the people were most in prece,[\[702\]](#)
He smot downe many a man.

There myght no man abyde hys stroakes,145
So fersly[\[703\]](#) on them he ran:
Then they threw wyndowes, and dores on him,
And so toke that good yemàn.

There they hym bounde both hand and fote,
And in a deepe dungeon him cast:150
Now Cloudesle, sayd the justice,[\[704\]](#)
Thou shalt be hanged in hast.

'A payre of new gallowes, sayd the sherife,[\[705\]](#)
Now shal I for thee make;'
And the gates of Carleil shal be shutte:155
No man shal come in therat.

Then shall not helpe Clym of the Cloughe,
Nor yet shall Adam Bell,
Though they came with a thousand mo,
[Pg 161] Nor all the devels in hell.160

Early in the mornynge the justice uprose,
To the gates first can he gone,
And commaunded to be shut full close
Lightilè[\[706\]](#) everych-one.

Then went he to the markett place,165
As fast as he coulde hye;
There a payre of new gallowes he set up
Besyde the pyllorye.

A lytle boy 'among them asked,'
What meanted that gallow-tre?170
They sayde to hange a good yemàn,
Called Wylliam of Cloudeslè.

That lytle boye was the towne swyne-heard,
And kept fayre Alyces swyne;

Oft he had seene William in the wodde,175

And geuen hym there to dyne.

He went out att a crevis of the wall,

And lightly to the woode dyd gone;

There met he with these wightye[\[707\]](#) yemen[\[708\]](#)

Shortly and anone.180

Alas! then sayde the lytle boye,

Ye tary here all too longe;

Cloudeslee is taken, and dampned[\[709\]](#) to death,

And readye for to honge.[\[710\]](#)

Alas! then sayd good Adam Bell,185

That ever we saw thys daye!

He had better have tarryed with us,

So ofte as we dyd hym praye.

[Pg 162]

He myght have dwelt in grene forèste,

Under the shadowes greene,[\[711\]](#)190

And have kepte both hym and us att reste,

Out of all trouble and teene.[\[712\]](#)

Adam bent a ryght good bow,

A great hart sone hee had slayne:

Take that, chylde, he sayde, to thy dynner,195

And bryng me myne arrowe agayne.

Now go we hence, sayed these wightye yeomen,[\[713\]](#)

Tarry we no longer here;

We shall hym borowe[\[714\]](#) by God his grace,

Though we buy itt full dere.200

To Caerleil wente these bold yemen,

All in a mornyng of maye.

Here is a FYT of Cloudeslye,

And another is for to saye.

PART THE SECOND.



And when they came to mery Carleile,

All in 'the' mornyng tyde,

They founde the gates shut them untyll [\[715\]](#)

About on every syde.

Alas! then sayd good Adam Bell,5

That ever we were made men!

These gates be shut so wonderous fast,

We may not come therein.

[Pg 163]

Then bespake him Clym of the Clough,

Wyth a wyle we wyl us in bryng;10

Let us saye we be messengers,

Streight come nowe from our king.

Adam said, I have a letter written,

Now let us wysely werke,

We wyl saye we have the kynges seale;15

I holde the porter no clerke.

Then Adam Bell bete on the gates

With strokes great and stronge:

The porter marveiled, who was therat,

And to the gates he thronge. [\[716\]](#)20

Who is there now, sayde the porter,

That maketh all thys knockinge?

We be tow messengers, quoth Clim of the Clough,

Be come ryght from our kyng.

We have a letter, sayd Adam Bel,25

To the justice we must itt bryng;

Let us in our message to do,

That we were agayne to the kyng.

Here commeth none in, sayd the porter,

By hym that dyed on a tre,30

Tyll a false thefe be hanged,

Called Wyllyam of Cloude-slè.

Then spake the good yeman Clym of the Clough,

And swore by Mary fre,

And if that we stande long wythout,35

Like a thefe hanged shalt thou be.

Lo! here we have the kynges seale:

What, Lurden, [\[717\]](#) art thou wode? [\[718\]](#) [\[719\]](#)

The porter went [\[720\]](#) it had ben so,

[Pg 164] And lyghtly dyd off hys hode. [\[721\]](#)40

Welcome is my lordes seale, he saide;

For that ye shall come in.

He opened the gate full shortlye:

An euyl openyng for him.

Now are we in, sayde Adam Bell,⁴⁵

Wherof we are full faine;[\[722\]](#)

But Christ he knowes, that harowed[\[723\]](#) hell,

How we shall com out agayne.

Had we the keys, said Clim of the Clough,

Ryght wel then shoulde we spede,⁵⁰

Then might we come out wel ynough

When we se tyme and nede.

They called the porter to counsell,

And wrang his necke in two,

And caste hym in a depe dungeon,⁵⁵

And toke hys keys hym fro.

Now am I porter, sayd Adam Bel,

Se brother the keys are here,

The worst porter to merry Carleile

That 'the' had thys hundred yere.⁶⁰

And now wyll we our bowes bend,

Into the towne wyll we go,

For to delyuer our dere brothèr,

That lyeth in care and wo.

[Pg 165]

Then they bent theyr good ewe bowes,⁶⁵

And loked theyr stringes were round,[\[724\]](#)

The markett place in mery Carleile

They beset that stound.[\[725\]](#)

And, as they loked them besyde,

A paire of new galowes 'they' see,⁷⁰

And the justice with a quest[\[726\]](#) of squyers,

That judged William hanged to be.

And Cloudeslè lay redy there in a cart,

Fast bound both fote and hand;

And a stronge rop about hys necke,⁷⁵

All readye for to hange.

The justice called to him a ladde,

Cloudeslees clothes hee shold have,

To take the measure of that yemàn,
Therafter to make hys grave.80

I have sene as great mervaille, said Cloudesle,
As betweyne thys and pryme,
He that maketh a grave for mee,
Hymselfe may lye therin.

Thou speakest proudlye, said the justice,85
I will thee hange with my hande.
Full wel herd this his brethren two,
There styll as they dyd stande.

Then Cloudeslè cast his eyen asyde,
And saw hys 'brethren twaine'90
At a corner of the market place,
Redy the justice for to slaine.
[Pg 166]

I se comfort, sayd Cloudeslè,
Yet hope I well to fare,
If I might have my handes at wyll95
Ryght lytle wolde I care.

Then spake good Adam Bell
To Clym of the Clough so free,
Brother, se you marke the justyce wel;
Lo! yonder you may him se:100

And at the shyrife shote I wyll
Strongly wyth an arrowe kene;
A better shote in mery Carleile
Thys seven yere was not sene.

They loosed their arrowes both at once,[\[727\]](#)105
Of no man had they dread;
The one hyt the justice, the other the sheryfe,
That both theyr sides gan blede.[\[728\]](#)

All men voyded,[\[729\]](#) that them stode nye,
When the justice fell to the grounde,110
And the sherife nye hym by;
Eyther had his deathes wounde.

All the citezens fast gan flye,
They durst no longer abyde:
There lyghtly they losed Cloudeslee,115
Where he with ropes lay tyde.

Wyllyam start to an officer of the towne,
Hys axe 'from' hys hand he wronge,
On eche syde he smote them downe,
Hee thought he taryed to long.120

Wyllyam sayde to hys brethren two,
Thys daye let us lyve and die,
If ever you have nede, as I have now,
[Pg 167] The same shall you finde by me.

They shot so well in that tyde,125
Theyr stringes were of silke ful sure,
That they kept the stretes on every side;
That batayle did long endure.

They fought together as brethren true,
Lyke hardy men and bolde,130
Many a man to the ground they threw,
And many a herte made colde.

But when their arrowes were all gon,
Men preceded[\[730\]](#) to them full fast,
They drew theyr swordès then anone,135
And theyr bowes from them cast.

They went lyghtlye on theyr way,
Wyth swordes and buclers round;
By that it was mydd of the day,
They made many a wound.140

There was an out-horne[\[731\]](#) in Carleil blowen,
And the belles backwàrd dyd ryng,
Many a woman sayde, Alas!
And many theyr handes dyd wryng.

The mayre of Carleile forth com was,145
Wyth hym a ful great route:[\[732\]](#)
These yemen dred hym full sore,
Of theyr lyves they stode in great doute.[\[733\]](#)[\[734\]](#)
[Pg 168]

The mayre came armed a full great pace,
With a pollaxe in hys hande;150
Many a strong man wyth him was,
There in that stowre[\[735\]](#) to stande.

The mayre smot at Cloudeslee with his bil,[\[736\]](#)
Hys bucler he brast[\[737\]](#) in two,

Full many a yeman with great evyll,155
Alas! Treason they cryed for wo.
Kepe well the gates fast, they bad,
That these traytours therout not go.
But al for nought was that they wrought,
For so fast they downe were layde,160
Tyll they all thre, that so manfulli fought,
Were gotten without, abraide.[\[738\]](#)
Have here your keys, sayd Adam Bel,
Myne office I here forsake,
And yf you do by my counsell165
A new porter do ye make.
He threw theyr keys at theyr heads,
And bad them well to thryve,[\[739\]](#)
And all that letteth any good yeman
To come and comfort his wyfe.170
Thus be these good yeman gon to the wod
As lyghtly, as lefe on lynde;[\[740\]](#)
The lough and be mery in theyr mode,
Theyr enemyes were ferr behynd.
When they came to Englyshe wode,[\[741\]](#)175
Under the trusty tre,
There they found bowes full good,
[\[Pg 169\]](#) And arrowes full great plentye.
So God me help, sayd Adam Bell,
And Clym of the Clough so fre,180
I would we were in mery Carleile,
Before that fayre meynye.[\[742\]](#)
They set them downe, and made good chere,
And eate and dranke full well.
A second FYT of the wightye yeomen:[\[743\]](#)185
Another I wyll you tell.

PART THE THIRD.



As they sat in Englyshe wood,

Under the green-wode tre,
They thought they herd a woman wepe,
But her they mought[\[744\]](#) not se.

Sore then syghed the fayre Alyce:5
'That ever I sawe thys day!'
For nowe is my dere husband slayne:
Alas! and wel-a-way!

Myght I have spoken wyth hys dere brethren,
Or with eyther of them twayne,10
To show them what him befell,
My hart were out of payne.

Cloudeslè walked a lytle beside,
He looked under the grene wood lynde,
He was ware of his wife, and chyldren three,15
[Pg 170] Full wo in harte and mynde.

Welcome, wyfe, then sayde Wyllyam,
Under 'this' trusti tre:
I had wende[\[745\]](#) yesterday, by swete saynt John,
Thou sholdest me never 'have' se.[\[746\]](#)20

"Now well is me that ye be here,
My harte is out of wo."
Dame, he sayde, be mery and glad,
And thanke my brethren two.

Herof to speake, said Adam Bell,25
I-wis it is no bote:
The meate, that we must supp withall,
It runneth yet fast on fote.

Then went they downe into a launde,[\[747\]](#)
These noble archares all thre;30
Eche of them slew a hart of greece,[\[748\]](#)
The best that they cold se.

Have here the best, Alyce, my wyfe,
Sayde Wyllyam of Cloudeslye;
By cause ye so bouldly stode by me35
When I was slayne full nye.

Then went they to suppère
Wyth suche meate as they had;
And thanked God of ther fortune:
They were both mery and glad.40

And when they had supped well,
Certayne withouten lease,[\[749\]](#)
Cloudeslè sayd, We wyll to our kyng,
To get us a charter of peace.
[Pg 171]

Alyce shal be at our sojournyng⁴⁵
In a nunnery here besyde;
My tow sonnes shall wyth her go,
And there they shall abyde.
Myne eldest son shall go wyth me;
For hym have 'you' no care:[\[750\]](#)⁵⁰
And he shall bring you worde agayn,
How that we do fare.

Thus be these yemen to London gone,
As fast as they myght 'he,'[\[751\]](#)
Tyll they came to the kynges pallàce,⁵⁵
Where they woulde nedes be.

And whan they came to the kynges courte,
Unto the pallace gate,
Of no man wold they aske no leave,
But boldly went in therat.⁶⁰

They preceð prestly[\[752\]](#) into the hall,
Of no man had they dreade:
The porter came after, and dyd them call,
And with them began to chyde.

The usher sayde, Yemen, what wold ye have?⁶⁵
I pray you tell to me:

You myght thus make offycers shent:[\[753\]](#)
Good syrs, of whence be ye?

Syr, we be out-lawes of the forest
Certayne withouten lease;⁷⁰
And hether we be come to the kyng,
To get us a charter of peace.

And whan they came before the kyng,
As it was the lawe of the lande,
The kneled downe without lettyng,⁷⁵
[Pg 172] And eche held up his hand.

The sayed, Lord, we beseche the here,
That ye wyll graunt us grace;

For we have slayne your fat falow dere

In many a sondry place.⁸⁰

What be your nams, then said our king,

Anone that you tell me?

They sayd, Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,

And Wyllyam of Cloudeslè.

Be ye those theves, then sayd our kyng,⁸⁵

That men have tolde of to me?

Here to God I make an avowe,

Ye shal be hanged al thre.

Ye shal be dead without mercy,

As I am kynge of this lande.⁹⁰

He commanded his officers everich-one,

Fast on them to lay hande.

There they toke these good yemen,

And arested them al thre:

So may I thryve, sayd Adam Bell,⁹⁵

Thys game lyketh not me.

But, good lorde, we beseche you now,

That yee graunt us grace,

Insomuche as 'frely' we be to you come,

'As frely' we may fro you passe,¹⁰⁰

With such weapons, as we have here,

Tyll we be out of your place;

And yf we lyve this hundreth yere,

We wyll aske you no grace.

Ye speake proudly, sayd the kynge;¹⁰⁵

Ye shall be hanged all thre.

[Pg 173] That were great pitye, then sayd the quene,

If any grace myght be.

My lorde, whan I came fyrst into this lande

To be your wedded wyfe,¹¹⁰

The fyrst boone that I wold aske,^[754]

Ye would graunt it me belyfe:^[755]

And I asked you never none tyll now;

Therefore good lorde, graunt it me,

Now aske it, madam, sayd the kynge,¹¹⁵

And graunted it shal be.

Then, good my lord, I you beseche,

These yemen graunt ye me.

Madame, ye myght have asked a boone,

That shuld have been worth them all thre.120

Ye myght have asked towres, and townes,

Parkes and forestes plentè.

None soe pleasant to my pay,[\[756\]](#) shee sayd;

Nor none so lefe[\[757\]](#) to me.

Madame, sith it is your desyre,125

Your askyng graunted shal be;

But I had lever have geven you

Good market townes thre.

The quene was a glad woman,

And sayde, Lord, gramarcy:[\[758\]](#)[\[759\]](#)130

I dare undertake for them,

That true men shal they be.

But good my lord, speke som mery word,

That comfort they may se.

I graunt you grace, then sayd our king;135

Washe, felos, and to meate go ye.

[Pg 174]

They had not setten but a whyle

Certayne without lesynge,[\[760\]](#)

There came messengers out of the north

With letters to our kyng.140

And whan the came before the kynge,

They knelt downe on theyr kne;

And sayd, Lord, your officers grete you well,

Of Carleile in the north cuntrè.

How fareth my justice, sayd the kyng,145

And my sherife also?

Syr, they be slayne without leasyng,

And many an officer mo.

Who hath them slayne, sayd the kyng;

Anone that thou tell me?150

"Adam Bell, and Clime of the Clough,

And Wyllyam of Cloudeslè."

Alas for rewth![\[761\]](#) then sayd our kynge:

My hart is wonderous sore;

I had lever[\[762\]](#) than a thousande pounde,155

I had knowne of thys before;

For I have graunted them grace,

And that forthynketh[\[763\]](#) me:

But had I knowne all thys before,

They had been hanged all thre.160

The kyng hee opened the letter anone,

Himselfe he red it thro,

And founde how these outlawes had slain

Thre hundred men and mo:

Fyrst the justice, and the sheryfe,165

And the mayre of Carleile towne;

Of all the constables and catchipolles

[Pg 175] Alyve were 'scant' left one:[\[764\]](#)

The baylyes, and the bedyls both,

And the sergeauntes of the law,170

And forty fosters of the fe,[\[765\]](#)

These outlawes had yslaw:[\[766\]](#)

And broke his parks, and slayne his dere;

Of all they chose the best;

So perelous out-lawes, as they were,175

Walked not by easte nor west.

When the kynge this letter had red,

In hys harte he syghed sore:

Take up the tables anone he bad,

For I may eat no more.180

The kyng called hys best archars

To the buttes wyth hym to go:

I wyll se these felowes shote, he sayd,

In the north have wrought this wo.

The kynges bowmen buske them blyve,[\[767\]](#)[\[768\]](#)185

And the quenes archers also;

So dyd these thre wyghtye yemen;

With them they thought to go.

There twyse, or thryse they shote about

For to assay theyr hande;190

There was no shote these yemen shot,

That any prycke[\[769\]](#) myght stand.

Then spake Wylliam of Cloudeslè;

By him that for me dyed,

I hold hym never no good archar,195

[Pg 176] That shoteth at buttes so wyde.

'At what a butte now wold ye shote,'

I pray thee tell to me?

At suche a but, syr, he sayd,

As men use in my countree.200

Wyllyam wente into a fyeld,

And 'with him' his two brethren:[\[770\]](#)

There they set up two hasell roddes[\[771\]](#)[\[770\]](#)

Twenty score paces betwene.[\[772\]](#)

I hold him an archar, said Cloudeslè,205

That yonder wande cleveþ in two.

Here is none suche, sayd the kyng,

Nor no man can so do.[\[773\]](#)

I shall assaye, syr, sayd Cloudeslè,

Or that I farther go.210

Cloudesly with a bearyng arowe[\[774\]](#)

Clave the wand in two.[\[770\]](#)

Thou art the best archer, then said the king,

Forsothe that ever I se.

And yet for your love, sayd Wyllyam,215

I wyll do more maystery.[\[775\]](#)

I have a sonne is seven yere olde,

He is to me full deare;

I wyll hym tye to a stake;

All shall se, that be here;220

And lay an apple upon hys head,

And go syxe score paces hym fro,[\[776\]](#)

And I my selfe with a brode aròw

[Pg 177] Shall cleve the apple in two.

Now haste the, then sayd the kyng,225

By hym that dyed on a tre,

But yf thou do not, as thou hest sayde,

Hanged shalt thou be.

And thou touche his head or gowne,

In fyght that men may se,230

By all the sayntes that be in heaven,

I shall hange you all thre.

That I have promised, said William,

That I wyll never forsake.

And there even before the kynge²³⁵

In the earth he drove a stake:

And bound thereto his eldest sonne,

And bad hym stand styll thereat;

And turned the childes face him fro,

Because he should not start.²⁴⁰

An apple upon his head he set,

And then his bowe he bent:

Syxe score paces they were meaten,^[777]

And thether Cloudeslè went.

There he drew out a fayr brode arrowe,²⁴⁵

Hys bowe was great and longe,

He set that arrowe in his bowe,

That was both styffe and stronge

He prayed the people, that wer there,

That they 'all still wold' stand,²⁵⁰

For he that shoteth for such a wager,

Behoveth a stedfast hand.^[778]

[Pg 178]

Muche people prayed for Cloudeslè,

That his lyfe saved myght be,

And whan he made hym redy to shote,²⁵⁵

There was many weeping ee.

'But' Cloudeslè cleft the apple in two,

'His sonne he did not nee.'^[779]

Over Gods forbode, sayde the kinge,

That thou shold shote at me.²⁶⁰

I geve thee eightene pence a day,

And my bowe shalt thou bere,

And over all the north countrè

I make the chyfe rydèr.^[780]

And I thyrtene pence a day, said the quene,^[781]²⁶⁵

By God, and by my fay;^[782]

Come feche thy payment when thou wylt,

No man shall say the nay.

Wyllyam, I make the a gentleman

Of clothyng, and of fe:²⁷⁰

And thy two brethren, yemen of my chambre,

For they are so semely to se.

Your sonne, for he is tendre of age,

Of my wyne-seller he shall be;

And when he commeth to mans estate,²⁷⁵

Better avaunced shall he be.

And, Wyllyam, bring me your wife, said the quene,

Me longeth her sore to se:

She shall be my chefe gentlewoman,

To governe my nurserye.²⁸⁰

The yemen thanked them all curteously.

To some byshop wyl we wend,^[783]

Of all the synnes, that we have done,

[Pg 179] To be assoyld^[784] at his hand.

So forth be gone these good yemen,²⁸⁵

As fast as they might 'he^[785]';

And after came and dwelled with the kynge,

And dyed good men all thre.

Thus endeth the lives of these good yemen;

God send them eternall blysse;²⁹⁰

And all, that with a hand-bowe shoteth:

That of heven may never mysse. Amen.

II.

THE AGED LOVER RENOUNCETH LOVE.



The Grave-digger's song in *Hamlet*, act v. is taken from three stanzas of the following poem, though greatly altered and disguised, as the same were corrupted by the ballad-singers of Shakespeare's time; or perhaps so designed by the poet himself, the better to suit the character of an illiterate clown. The original is preserved among Surrey's Poems, and is attributed to Lord *Vaux*, by George Gascoigne, who tells us, it "was thought by some to be made upon his death-bed;" a popular error which he laughs at. (See his *Epist. to Yong Gent.* prefixed to his *Posies*, 1575, 4to.) It is also ascribed to Lord Vaux in a manuscript copy preserved in the British Museum.^[786] This Lord [Pg 180] was remarkable for his skill in drawing feigned manners, &c. for so I understand an ancient writer. "The Lord Vaux his commendation lyeth chiefly in the facilitie of his meetre, and the aptnesse of his descriptions such as he taketh upon him to make, namely in sundry of his Songs, wherein he sheweth the *counterfait action* very lively and pleasantly." *Arte of Eng. Poesie*, 1589, p. 51. See another *Song* by this Poet in vol. ii. No. viii.

[Thomas second Lord Vaux, the author of this poem, was born in the year 1510. He wrote several small pieces of the same

character which evince taste and feeling, and his contributions to the *Paradise of Dainty Devices* exceed in number those of Richard Edwards himself, whose name appears upon the original title-page as the chief author. Lord Vaux was a courtier as well as a poet, and was one of the splendid retinue which attended Wolsey in his embassy, in the 19th Henry VIII., 1527, to the Court of France to negotiate a peace. He took his seat in the House of Lords in the 22nd Henry VIII., and two years afterwards, 1532, waited on the king to Calais and thence to Boulogne. He was rewarded with the Order of the Bath at the Coronation of Anne Boleyn, and was also appointed Captain of the Island of Jersey, which office he surrendered in the 28th Henry VIII.]



I loth that I did love,
In youth that I thought swete,
As time requires: for my behove^[787]
Me thinkes they are not mete.^[788]

My lustes they do me leave,⁵
My fansies all are fled;^[789]
And tract of time begins to weave
Gray heares upon my hed.

For Age with steling steps,
Hath clawde me with his crowch,^{[790][791]}¹⁰
And lusty 'Youthe' awaye he leapes,^[792]
[Pg 181] As there had bene none such.

My muse doth not delight
Me, as she did before:
My hand and pen are not in plight,¹⁵
As they have bene of yore.

For Reason me denies,
'All' youthly idle rime;^[793]
And day by day to me she cries,
Leave off these toyes in tyme.²⁰

The wrinkles in my brow,
The furrowes in my face
Say, Limping age will 'lodge' him now,^[794]
Where youth must geve him place.

The harbenger of death,²⁵
To me I se him ride,
The cough, the cold, the gasping breath,
Doth bid me to provide

A pikeax and a spade,
And eke a shrowding shete,[\[795\]](#)30
A house of clay for to be made
For such a guest most mete.
Me thinkes I heare the clarke,
That knoles the carefull knell;[\[796\]](#)
And bids me leave my 'wearye' warke,[\[797\]](#)35
Ere nature me compell.
My kepers[\[798\]](#) knit the knot,
That youth doth laugh to scorne,[\[799\]](#)
Of me that 'shall bee cleane' forgot,[\[800\]](#)
[Pg 182] As I had 'ne'er' bene borne.[\[801\]](#)40
Thus must I youth geve up,
Whose badge I long did weare:
To them I yeld the wanton cup,
That better may it beare.
Lo here the bared skull;[\[802\]](#)45
By whose balde signe I know,
That stouping age away shall pull
'What' youthful yeres did sow.[\[803\]](#)
For Beautie with her band,
These croked cares had wrought,50
And shipped me into the land,
From whence I first was brought.
And ye that bide behinde,
Have ye none other trust:
As ye of claye were cast by kinde,55
So shall ye 'turne' to dust.[\[804\]](#)

III.

JEPHTHAH JUDGE OF ISRAEL.



In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, act ii. the hero of the play takes occasion to banter Polonius with some scraps of an old Ballad, which has never appeared yet in any collection: for which reason, as it is but short, it will not perhaps be unacceptable to the reader; who will also be diverted with the pleasant absurdities of the composition. It was retrieved from [Pg 183]utter oblivion by a lady, who wrote it down from memory as she had formerly heard it sung by her father. I am indebted for it to the friendship of Mr. *Steevens*.

It has been said, that the original Ballad, in black-letter, is among Anthony à Wood's Collections in the Ashmolean Museum. But, upon application lately made, the volume which contained this Song was missing, so that it can only now be given as in the former Edition.

The Banter of Hamlet is as follows:

"*Hamlet*. 'O Jephtha, Judge of Israel,' what a treasure hadst thou?

Polonius. What a treasure had he, my Lord?

Ham. Why, 'One faire daughter, and no more, the which he loved passing well.'

Polon. Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am not I i' th' right, old Jephtha?

Polon. If you call me Jephtha, my Lord, I have a daughter, that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Polon. What follows then, my Lord?

Ham. Why, 'As by lot, God wot:' and then you know, 'It came to passe, As most like it was.' The first row of the pious chanson will shew you more."—*Act ii. sc. 2*.

[A more perfect copy of this ballad was reprinted by Evans in his *Collection of Old Ballads* from a black-letter broadside, and is included by Child in his *Collection of English and Scottish Ballads* (vol. viii. p. 198).

The wording is rather different in the two versions, and Evans's has two additional stanzas. It does not appear that anything is left out at line 18 of Percy's version, but in place of the stars at line 41 Evans's copy reads—

"A sacrifice to God on high;
My promise must be finishéd."]



Have you not heard these many years ago

Jephtha was judge of Israel?

He had one only daughter and no mo,

The which he loved passing well:

[Pg 184] And, as by lott,5

God wot,

It so came to pass,

As Gods will was,

That great wars there should be,

And none should be chosen chief but he10

And when he was appointed judge,

And chieftain of the company,

A solemn vow to God he made;

If he returned with victory,

At his return15

To burn

The first live thing,

* * * * *

That should meet with him then,

Off his house, when he should return agen.20

It came to pass, the wars was oer,

And he returned with victory;

His dear and only daughter first of all

Came to meet her father foremostly:

And all the way25

She did play

On tabret and pipe,

Full many a stripe,

With note so high,

For joy that her father is come so nigh.30

But when he saw his daughter dear

Coming on most foremostly,

He wrung his hands, and tore his hair,

And cryed out most piteously;

Oh! it's thou, said he,35

That have brought me

Low,

And troubled me so,

That I know not what to do.

For I have made a vow, he sed,

[Pg 185] The which must be replenished:40

* * * * *

"What thou hast spoke

Do not revoke:

What thou hast said,

Be not affraid;45

Altho' it be I;

Keep promises to God on high.

But, dear father, grant me one request,

That I may go to the wilderness,

Three months there with my friends to stay;50

There to bewail my virginity;

And let there be,

Said she,

Some two or three
Young maids with me."55
So he sent her away,
For to mourn, for to mourn, till her dying day.

IV. A ROBYN JOLLY ROBYN.



In his *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare introduces the clown singing part of the two first stanzas of the following Song; which has been recovered from an antient MS. of Dr. Harrington's at Bath, preserved among the many literary treasures transmitted to the ingenious and worthy possessor by a long line of most respectable ancestors. Of these only a small part hath been printed in the *Nugæ Antiquæ*, 3 vols. 12mo; a work which the publick impatiently wishes to see continued.

The song is thus given by Shakespeare, act iv. sc. 2:—

"*Clown*. 'Hey Robin, jolly Robin. [singing.]

Tell me how thy lady does.'

Clown. 'My lady is unkind, perdy.'

Malvolio. Fool——

Clown. 'Alas, why is she so?'

Malvolio. Fool, I say——

Clown. 'She loves another.'—Who calls, ha?"

Dr. *Farmer* has conjectured that the song should begin thus:

"Hey, jolly Robin, tell to me

How does thy lady do?

My lady is unkind perdy—

Alas, why is she so?"

But this ingenious emendation is now superseded by the proper readings of the old song itself, which is here printed from what appears the most ancient of Dr. Harrington's poetical MSS. and which has, therefore, been marked No. I. (Scil. p. 68.) That volume seems to have been written in the reign of King Henry VIII. and, as it contains many of the Poems of Sir *Thomas Wyat*, hath had almost all the contents attributed to him by marginal directions written with an old but later hand, and not always rightly, as, I think, might be made appear by other good authorities. Among the rest this song is there attributed to Sir *Thomas Wyat* also; but the discerning reader will probably judge it to belong to a more obsolete writer.

In the old MS. to the 3rd and 5th stanzas is prefixed this title, *Responce*, and to the 4th and 6th, *Le Plaintiff*; but in the last instance so evidently wrong, that it was thought better to omit these titles, and to mark the changes of the Dialogue by inverted commas. In other respects the MS. is strictly followed, except where noted in the margin.—Yet the first stanza appears to be defective, and it should seem that a line is wanting, unless the four first words were lengthened in the tune.



A Robyn,
Jolly Robyn,
Tell me how thy leman^[805] doeth,
And thou shalt knowe of myn.^[806]
'My lady is unkynde perde.'^[807]5
Alack! why is she so?
'She loveth an other better than me;
[Pg 187] And yet she will say no.'
I fynde no such doublenes:
I fynde women true.10
My lady loveth me dowlles,
And will change for no newe.
'Thou art happy while that doeth last;
But I say, as I fynde,
That women's love is but a blast,15
And torneth with the wynde.'
Suche folkes can take no harme by love,
That can abide their torn.^[808]
'But I alas can no way prove
In love but lake and morn.'²⁰
But if thou wilt avoyde thy harme
Lerne this lessen of me,
At others fieres thy selfe to warme,
And let them warme with the.

V.
A SONG TO THE LUTE IN MUSICKE.



This sonnet (which is ascribed to *Richard Edwards*,^[809] in the *Paradise of Daintie Devises*, fo. 31, b.) is by Shakespeare made the subject of some pleasant ridicule in his *Romeo and Juliet*, act iv. sc. 5, where he introduces Peter putting this question to the musicians.

"*Peter* ... why 'Silver Sound?' why 'Musicke with her silver sound?' what say you, Simon Catling?

I. Mus. Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

[Pg 188]

Pet. Pretty! what say you, Hugh Rebecke?

2. Mus. I say, silver sound, because musicians sound for silver.

Pet. Pretty too! what say you, James Sound-post.

3. Mus. Faith, I know not what to say.

Pet. ... I will say for you: It is 'Musicke with her silver sound,' because musicians have no gold for sounding."

This ridicule is not so much levelled at the song itself (which for the time it was written is not inelegant) as at those forced and unnatural explanations often given by us painful editors and expositors of ancient authors.

This copy is printed from an old quarto MS. in the Cotton Library (Vesp. A. 25), intituled, "Divers things of Hen. viij's time:" with some corrections from *The Paradise of Dainty Devises*, 1596.

[Richard Edwards, one of the chief contributors to the *Paradise of Dainty Devises*, was a facile and elegant poet much appreciated by his contemporaries but unjustly neglected now. Meres in his *Wits Treasury*, 1598, praises him, as "one of the best for comedy," and Puttenham gives him the same commendation. Thomas Twyne and George Turberville, wrote epitaphs upon him, and the latter says in the terms of unmeasured eulogy then fashionable—

"From Plautus he the palme and learned Terence won."

Edwards was born in Somersetshire about 1523, was educated at Oxford, and, in 1561, was constituted by Queen Elizabeth a Gentleman of the Royal Chapel and Master of the Singing Boys there. He attended the Queen on her visit to Oxford in 1566, and was employed to compose a play called *Palamon and Arcite*, which was acted before her Majesty in Christ Church Hall.]



Where gripinge grefes the hart would wounde,
And dolefulle dumps^[810] the mynde oppresse,
There musicke with her silver sound
With spede is wont to send redresse:
Of trobled mynds, in every sore,⁵
Swete musicke hathe a salve in store.

[Pg 189]

In joye yt maks our mirth abounde,
In woe yt cheres our hevvy sprites;
Be-strawghted^[811] heads relyef hath founde,
By musickes pleasaunt swete delightes:¹⁰
Our senses all, what shall I say more?
Are subjecte unto musicks lore.

The Gods by musicke have theire prayse;
The lyfe, the soul therein doth joye:
For, as the Romaine poet sayes,¹⁵
In seas, whom pyratts would destroy,
A dolphin saved from death most sharpe
Arion playing on his harpe.

O heavenly gyft, that rules the mynd,
Even as the sterne dothe rule the shippe!²⁰
O musicke, whom the gods assinde
To comforte manne, whom cares would nippe!
Since thow both man and beste doest move,
What beste ys he, wyll the [\[812\]](#) disprove?

VI.

KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR-MAID



Is a story often alluded to by our old Dramatic Writers. Shakespeare, in his *Romeo and Juliet*, act ii. sc. 1, makes Mercutio say,

----"Her (Venus's) purblind son and heir,
Young Adam [\[813\]](#) Cupid, he that shot so true,
When King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid."

[Pg 190]

As the 13th line of the following ballad seems here particularly alluded to, it is not improbable but Shakespeare wrote it *shot so trim*, which the players or printers, not perceiving the allusion, might alter to *true*. The former, as being the more humorous expression, seems most likely to have come from the mouth of Mercutio. [\[814\]](#)

In the 2d Part of *Hen. IV.* A. 5, Sc. 3, Falstaff is introduced affectedly saying to Pistoll,

"O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news?
Let king Cophetua know the truth thereof."

These lines, Dr. Warburton thinks, were taken from an old bombast play of *King Cophetua*. No such play is, I believe, now to be found; but it does not therefore follow that it never existed. Many dramatic pieces are referred to by old writers, [\[815\]](#) which are not now extant, or even mentioned in any list. In the infancy of the stage, plays were often exhibited that were never printed.

It is probably in allusion to the same play that Ben Jonson says, in his Comedy of *Every Man in his Humour*, A. 3, Sc. 4:

"I have not the heart to devour thee, an' I might be made as *rich* as King Cophetua."

At least there is no mention of King Cophetua's *riches* in the present ballad, which is the oldest I have met with on the

subject.

It is printed from Rich. Johnson's *Crown Garland of Goulden Roses*, 1612,[\[816\]](#) 12mo. (where it is intitled simply *A Song of a Beggar and a King*;) corrected by another copy.

[In the *Collection of Old Ballads*, 1723 (vol. i. p. 138) there is a ballad on the same subject as the following popular one. It is entitled "*Cupid's Revenge*, or an account of a king who slighted all women, and at length was constrained to marry a beggar, who proved a fair and virtuous queen."]

[Pg 191]



I read that once in Affrica
A princely wight[\[817\]](#) did raine,
Who had to name Cophetua,
As poets they did faine:
From natures lawes he did decline,5
For sure he was not of my mind,
He cared not for women-kinde,
But did them all disdaine.
But, marke, what hapned on a day,
As he out of his window lay,10
He saw a beggar all in gray,
The which did cause his paine.

The blinded boy, that shootes so trim,[\[818\]](#)
From heaven downe did hie;
He drew a dart and shot at him,15
In place where he did lye:
Which soone did pierse him to the quicke,
And when he felt the arrow pricke,
Which in his tender heart did sticke,
He looketh as he would dye.20
What sudden chance is this, quoth he,
That I to love must subject be,
Which never thereto would agree,
But still did it defie?

Then from the window he did come,25
And laid him on his bed,
A thousand heapes of care did runne
Within his troubled head:
For now he meanes to crave her love,

And now he seekes which way to proove³⁰

How he his fancie might remoove,

And not this beggar wed.

[Pg 192] But Cupid had him so in snare,

That this poor begger must prepare

A salve to cure him of his care,³⁵

Or els he would be dead.

And, as he musing thus did lye,

He thought for to devise

How he might have her companye,

That so did 'maze his eyes.⁴⁰

In thee, quoth he, doth rest my life;

For surely thou shalt be my wife,

Or else this hand with bloody knife

The Gods shall sure suffice.

Then from his bed he soon arose,⁴⁵

And to his pallace gate he goes;

Full little then this begger knowes

When she the king espies.

The gods preserve your majesty,

The beggers all gan cry:⁵⁰

Vouchsafe to give your charity

Our childrens food to buy.

The king to them his pursse did cast,

And they to part it made great haste;

This silly woman was the last⁵⁵

That after them did hye.

The king he cal'd her back againe,

And unto her he gave his chaine;

And said, With us you shal remaine

Till such time as we dye:⁶⁰

For thou, quoth he, shalt be my wife,

And honoured for my queene;

With thee I meane to lead my life,

As shortly shall be seene:

Our wedding shall appointed be,⁶⁵

And every thing in its degree:

Come on, quoth he, and follow me,

[Pg 193] Thou shalt go shift thee cleane.

What is thy name, faire maid? quoth he.

Penelophon,[\[819\]](#) O king, quoth she:⁷⁰

With that she made a lowe courtsèy;

A trim one as I weene.

Thus hand in hand along they walke

Unto the king's pallàce:

The king with courteous comly talke⁷⁵

This begger doth imbrace:

The begger blusheth scarlet red,

And straight againe as pale as lead,

But not a word at all she said,

She was in such amaze.⁸⁰

At last she spake with trembling voyce,

And said, O king, I doe rejoyce

That you wil take me for your choyce,

And my degree's so base.

And when the wedding day was come,⁸⁵

The king commanded strait

The noblemen both all and some

Upon the queene to wait.

And she behaved herself that day,

As if she had never walkt the way;[\[820\]](#)⁹⁰

She had forgot her gowne of gray,

Which she did weare of late.

The proverbe old is come to passe,

The priest, when he begins his masse,

Forgets that ever clerke he was;⁹⁵

He knowth not his estate.

[Pg 194]

Here you may read, Cophetua,

Though long time fancie-fed,

Compelled by the blinded boy

The begger for to wed:¹⁰⁰

He that did lovers lookes disdaine,

To do the same was glad and faine,

Or else he would himselfe have slaine,

In storie, as we read.

Disdaine no whit, O lady deere,[\[821\]](#)¹⁰⁵

But pittie now thy servant heere,

Least that it hap to thee this yeare,

As to that king it did.

And thus they led a quiet life

During their princely raigne;¹¹⁰

And in a tombe were buried both,

As writers sheweth plaine.[\[822\]](#)
The lords they tooke it grievously,
The ladies tooke it heavily,
The commons cryed pitiously,115
Their death to them was paine,
Their fame did sound so passingly,
That it did pierce the starry sky,
And throughout all the world did flye
To every princes realme.[\[823\]](#)120

[Pg 195]



VII.

TAKE THY OLD CLOAK ABOUT THEE,



Is supposed to have been originally a Scotch ballad. The reader here has an ancient copy in the English idiom, with an additional stanza (the 2d.) never before printed. This curiosity is preserved in the Editor's folio MS. but not without corruptions, which are here removed by the assistance of the Scottish Edit. Shakespeare, in his *Othello*, act ii. has quoted one stanza, with some variations, which are here adopted: the old MS. readings of that stanza are however given in the margin.

[The Scottish version referred to above was printed in Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany*, and the king mentioned on line 49 is there named Robert instead of Stephen. He is King Harry in the folio MS.

The "corruptions" to which Percy alludes are all noted at the foot of the page, and in one instance at least (line 15) the MS. gives an important new reading. Mr. Hales thinks that the MS. version is the oldest form of the ballad, because the definite mention of the court looks more original than the use of the general term of town, and he says, "the poem naturally grew vaguer as it grew generally popular."[\[824\]](#)

Besides the reference to this ballad in *Othello* mentioned by Percy above, Mr. Hales has pointed out to me another evident allusion in the *Tempest*, act iv. sc. 1, where Trinculo says,

"O King Stephano, O Peere: O worthy Stephano,
Looke what a *wardrobe* here is for thee."

(Folio 1623, Booth's ed. p. 15, col. 2.)

The cloak that had been in wear for forty-four years was likely to be a sorry clout at the end of that time, but the clothes of all classes were then expected to last from year to year without renewal. Woollen cloths were of old the chief material of

male and female attire. When new the nap was very long, and after being worn for some time, it was customary to have it shorn, a process which was repeated as often as the stuff would bear it. Thus we find the Countess of Leicester (Eleanor third daughter of King John, and wife of Simon de Montfort) in 1265, sending Hicque the tailor to London to get her robes re-shorn.[\[825\]](#)]

[Pg 196]



This winters weather itt waxeth cold,
And frost doth freese on every hill,
And Boreas blowes his blasts soe bold,
That all our cattell are like to spill;[\[826\]](#)
Bell my wiffe, who loves noe strife,⁵
She sayd unto me quietlye,
Rise up, and save cow Crumbockes liffe,
Man, put thine old cloake about thee.

He.

O Bell, why dost thou flyte[\[827\]](#) 'and scorne'?[\[828\]](#)
Thou kenst my cloak is very thin:[\[829\]](#)¹⁰
Itt is soe bare and overworne
A cricke[\[830\]](#) he theron cannot renn:[\[831\]](#)
Then Ile noe longer borrowe nor lend,
'For once Ile new appareld bee,[\[832\]](#)
To-morrow Ile to towne and spend,'¹⁵
For Ile have a new cloake about mee.

She.

Cow Crumbocke is a very good cowe,
Shee ha beene alwayes true to the payle,
Shee has helpt us to butter and cheese, I trow,
And other things shee will not fayle;²⁰
I wold be loth to see her pine,[\[833\]](#)
Good husband, counsell take of mee,[\[834\]](#)
It is not for us to go soe fine,[\[835\]](#)
Man, take thine old cloake about thee.

[Pg 197]

He.

My cloake it was a verry good cloake,²⁵
Itt hath been alwayes true to the weare,

But now it is not worth a groat;[\[836\]](#)
I have had it four and forty yeere:
Sometime itt was of cloth in graine,[\[837\]](#)
'Tis now but a sigh clout[\[838\]](#) as you may see,30
It will neither hold out winde nor raine;
And Ile have a new cloake about mee.

She.

It is four and fortye yeeres agoe
Since the one of us the other did ken,
And we have had betwixt us towe35
Of children either nine or ten;
Wee have brought them up to women and men;
In the feare of God I trow they bee;
And why wilt thou thyselfe misken?[\[839\]](#)
Man, take thine old cloake about thee.40

He.

O Bell my wiffe, why dost thou 'floute!'[\[840\]](#)
Now is nowe, and then was then:
Seeke now all the world throughout,
Thou kenst not clownes from gentlemen.
They are cladd in blacke, greene, yellowe, or 'gray',[\[841\]](#)45
Soe far above their owne degree:
Once in my life Ile 'doe as they,'[\[842\]](#)
For Ile have a new cloake about mee.

[Pg 198]

She.

King Stephen was a worthy peere,[\[843\]](#)
His breeches cost him but a crowne,[\[844\]](#)50
He held them sixpence all too deere;[\[845\]](#)
Therefore he calld the taylor Lowne.[\[846\]](#)[\[847\]](#)
He was a wight of high renowne,[\[848\]](#)
And thouse[\[849\]](#) but of a low degree:
Itt's pride that putts this countrie downe,55
Man, take thine old cloake about thee.

He.

'Bell my wife she loves not strife,[\[850\]](#)
Yet she will lead me if she can;
And oft, to live a quiet life,
I am forced to yield, though Ime good-man:'60

Itt's not for a man with a woman to threape,[\[851\]](#)

Unlesse he first give oer the plea:

As wee began wee now will leave,[\[852\]](#)

And Ile take mine old cloake about mee.[\[853\]](#)

[Pg 199]

VIII.

WILLOW, WILLOW, WILLOW.



It is from the following stanzas that Shakespeare has taken his song of the *Willow*, in his *Othello*, act iv. sc. 3, though somewhat varied and applied by him to a female character. He makes Desdemona introduce it in this pathetic and affecting manner:

"My mother had a maid call'd Barbara:

She was in love; and he, she lov'd, prov'd mad,

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd! And did forsake her. She had a Song of—*Willow*.

An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,

And she died singing it."

This is given from a black-letter copy in the Pepys collection, thus intitled, *A Lover's Complaint, being forsaken of his Love. To a pleasant tune*.

["Willow, willow" was a favourite burden for songs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and one of John Heywood's songs has the following—

"All a grene wyllow; wyllow, wyllow, wyllow,

All a grene wyllow is my garland."

In the *Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578) there is a slightly different burden—

"Willow, willow, willow, sing all of green willow,

Sing all of green willow, shall be my garland."

There is another copy of the following song in the Roxburghe Collection (i. 54, 55) printed in *Roxburghe Ballads* (ed. W. Chappell, 1869, Part I. p. 171). Both these are of the first half of the seventeenth century, and an earlier copy than either is printed by Mr. Chappell in his *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, i. 206.

Dr. Rimbault[\[854\]](#) has drawn attention to the following parody, dated 1668—

[Pg 200]

"A poore soule sat sighing near a ginger-bread stall,

O ginger-bread O, ginger-bread O!

With his hands in his pockets, his head on the wall,

O ginger-bread O, ginger-bread O!
You pye-wifes of Smithfield, what would ye be at!
Who talks of plum-pudding? here's better than that,
For here's ginger-bread O, ginger-bread O!"]



A poore soule sat sighing under a sicamore tree;
O willow, willow, willow!
With his hand on his bosom, his head on his knee:
O willow, willow, willow!
O willow, willow, willow!5
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd.

He sigh'd in his singing, and after each grone,
Come willow, &c.
I am dead to all pleasure, my true-love is gone;
O willow, &c.10
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd.

My love she is turned; untrue she doth prove:
O willow, &c.
She renders me nothing but hate for my love.
O willow, &c.15
Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

O pittie me, (cried he) ye lovers, each one;
O willow, &c.
Her heart's hard as marble; she rues not my mone.
O willow, &c.20
Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

The cold streams ran by him, his eyes wept apace;
O willow, &c.
The salt tears fell from him, which drowned his face:
[Pg 201] O willow, &c.25
Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

The mute birds sate by him, made tame by his mones:
O willow, &c.
The salt tears fell from him, which softened the stones.
O willow, &c.30
Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd!

Let nobody blame me, her scornes I do prove;

O willow, &c.

She was borne to be faire; I, to die for her love.

O willow, &c.35

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd.

O that beauty should harbour a heart that's so hard!

Sing willow, &c.

My true love rejecting without all regard.

O willow, &c.40

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

Let love no more boast him in palace, or bower;

O willow, &c.

For women are trothles,[\[855\]](#) and flote[\[856\]](#) in an houre.

O willow, &c.45

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

But what helps complaining? In vaine I complaine:

O willow, &c.

I must patiently suffer her scorne and disdaine.

O willow, &c.50

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

Come, all you forsaken, and sit down by me,

O willow, &c.

He that 'plaines of his false love, mine's falser than she.

O willow, &c.55

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

[Pg 202]

The willow wreath weare I, since my love did fleet;

O willow, &c.

A Garland for lovers forsaken most meete.

O willow, &c.60

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd!

Part the Second.



Lowe lay'd by my sorrow, begot by disdaine;

O willow, willow, willow!

Against her too cruell, still still I complaine,

O willow, willow, willow!

O willow, willow, willow!5

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd!

O love too injurious, to wound my poore heart!

O willow, &c.

To suffer the triumph, and joy in my smart:

O willow, &c.10

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

O willow, willow, willow! the willow garlànd,

O willow, &c.

A sign of her falsenesse before me doth stand:

O willow, &c.15

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

As here it doth bid to despair and to dye,

O willow, &c.

So hang it, friends, ore me in grave where I lye:

O willow, &c.20

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd.

In grave where I rest mee, hang this to the view

O willow, &c.

Of all that doe knowe her, to blaze her untrue.

O willow, &c.25

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

[Pg 203]

With these words engraven, as epitaph meet,

O willow, &c.

"Here lyes one, drank poyson for potion most sweet."

O willow, &c.30

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

Though she thus unkindly hath scorned my love,

O willow, &c.

And carelesly smiles at the sorrowes I prove;

O willow, &c.35

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

I cannot against her unkindly exclaim,

O willow, &c.

Cause once well I loved her, and honoured her name:

O willow, &c.40

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

The name of her sounded so sweete in mine eare,

O willow, &c.

It rays'd my heart lightly, the name of my deare;

O willow, &c.45

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd.

As then 'twas my comfort, it now is my griefe;

O willow, &c.

It now brings me anguish, then brought me reliefe.

O willow, &c.50

Sing, O the greene willow, &c.

Farewell, faire false hearted: plaints end with my breath!

O willow, willow, willow!

Thou dost loath me, I love thee, though cause of my death.

O willow, willow, willow!55

O willow, willow, willow!

Sing, O the greene willow shall be my garlànd.

[Pg 204]

IX.

SIR LANCELOT DU LAKE.



This ballad is quoted in Shakespeare's second Part of *Henry IV.* act ii. The subject of it is taken from the ancient romance of K. Arthur (commonly called *Morte Arthur*) being a poetical translation of chap. cviii. cix. cx. in Pt. 1st, as they stand in ed. 1634, 4to. In the older editions the chapters are differently numbered.—This song is given from a printed copy, corrected in part by a fragment in the Editor's folio MS.

In the same play of 2 *Hen. IV.* *Silence* hums a scrap of one of the old ballads of Robin Hood. It is taken from the following stanza of *Robin Hood and the Pindar of Wakefield*.

"All this beheard three wighty yeomen,

Tw'as Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John:

With that they espy'd the jolly Pindar

As he sate under a thorne."

That ballad may be found on every stall, and therefore is not here reprinted.

[This is a rhymed version of some chapters in Malory's *Mort d'Arthur* (Book vi. of Caxton's edition), said to have been written by Thomas Deloney towards the end of Elizabeth's reign. It first occurs in the *Garland of Good Will*, reprinted by the Percy Society (vol. xxx.)

The ballad appears to have been highly popular, and it is quoted by Marston in the *Malcontent* and by Beaumont and Fletcher in the *Little French Lawyer*, as well as by Shakspeare.

The copy in the Percy MS. (ed. Hales and Furnivall, 1867, vol. i. p. 84) is imperfect in two places, and lines 30 to 60, 73 to 76, and 95 to 124 are not to be found there, but with these exceptions it is much the same as the ballad printed here.]

[Pg 205]



When Arthur first in court began,
And was approved king,
By force of armes great victorys wanne,
And conquest home did bring.

Then into England straight he came⁵
With fifty good and able
Knights, that resorted unto him,
And were of his round table:

And he had justs and turnaments,
Whereto were many prest,^[857]¹⁰
Wherin some knights did farr excell
And eke surmount the rest.

But one Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Who was approved well,
He for his deeds and feats of armes,¹⁵
All others did excell.

When he had rested him a while,
In play, and game, and sportt,^[858]
He said he wold goe prove himselfe
In some adventurous sort.²⁰

He armed rode in a forrest wide,
And met a damsell faire,
Who told him of adventures great,
Wherto he gave great eare.

Such wold I find, quoth Lancelott:²⁵
For that cause came I hither.
Thou seemst, quoth shee, a knight full good,
And I will bring thee thither.

[Pg 206]

Wheras a mighty knight doth dwell,^[859]
That now is of great fame:³⁰
Therefore tell me what wight thou art,

And what may be thy name.

"My name is Lancelot du Lake."

Quoth she, it likes me than:[\[860\]](#)

Here dwelles a knight who never was³⁵

Yet matcht with any man:

Who has in prison threescore knights

And four, that he did wound;

Knights of king Arthurs court they be,

And of his table round.⁴⁰

She brought him to a river side.

And also to a tree,

Whereon a copper basen hung,

And many shields to see.

He struck soe hard, the basen broke;⁴⁵

And Tarquin soon he spied:

Who drove a horse before him fast,

Whereon a knight lay tyed.

Sir knight, then sayd Sir Lancelôt,

Bring me that horse-load hither,⁵⁰

And lay him downe, and let him rest:

Weel try our force together:

For, as I understand, thou hast,

Soe far as thou art able,

Done great despite and shame unto⁵⁵

The knights of the Round Table.

If thou be of the Table Round,

Quoth Tarquin speedilye,

Both thee and all thy fellowship

[Pg 207] I utterly defye.⁶⁰

That's over much, quoth Lancelott tho,[\[861\]](#)

Defend thee by and by.

They sett their speares[\[862\]](#) unto their steeds,

And eache att other flie.

They coucht their speares, (their horses ran,⁶⁵

As though there had beene thunder)

And stricke them each immidst their shields,

Wherewith they broke in sunder.

Their horsses backes brake under them,

The knights were both astound:[\[863\]](#)⁷⁰

To avoyd their horsses they made haste
And light upon the ground.

They tooke them to their shields full fast,
Their swords they drew out than,
With mighty strokes most eagerlye⁷⁵
Each at the other ran.

They wounded were, and bled full sore,
They both for breath did stand,
And leaning on their swords awhile,
Quoth Tarquine, Hold thy hand,⁸⁰

And tell to me what I shall aske.
Say on, quoth Lancelot tho.
Thou art, quoth Tarquine, the best knight
That ever I did know;

And like a knight, that I did hate:⁸⁵
Soe that thou be not hee,
I will deliver all the rest,
And eke accord with thee.
[Pg 208]

That is well said, quoth Lancelott;
But sith it must be soe,⁹⁰
What knight is that thou hatest thus?
I pray thee to me show.

His name is Lancelot du Lake,
He slew my brother deere;
Him I suspect of all the rest:⁹⁵
I would I had him here.

Thy wish thou hast, but yet unknowne,
I am Lancelot du Lake,
Now knight of Arthurs Table Round;
King Hauds son of Schuwake;^[864]¹⁰⁰

And I desire thee do thy worst,
Ho, ho, quoth Tarquin tho,
One of us two shall end our lives
Before that we do go.

If thou be Lancelot du Lake,¹⁰⁵
Then welcome shalt thou bee:
Wherfore see thou thyself defend,
For now defye I thee.

They buckled then together so,
Like unto wild boares rashing;[\[865\]](#)110
And with their swords and shields they ran
[Pg 209] At one another slashing:
The ground besprinkled was with blood:
Tarquin began to yield;
For he gave backe for wearinesse,115
And lowe did beare his shield.

This soone Sir Lancelot espyde,
He leapt upon him then,
He pull'd him downe upon his knee,
And rushing off his helm,120
Forthwith he strucke his necke in two,
And, when he had soe done,
From prison threescore knights and four
Delivered everye one.

X.
CORYDON'S FAREWELL TO PHILLIS,



Is an attempt to paint a lover's irresolution, but so poorly executed, that it would not have been admitted into this collection, if it had not been quoted in Shakespeare's *Twelfth-Night*, act ii. sc. 3.—It is found in a little ancient miscellany, intituled, *The Golden Garland of Princely Delights*, 12mo. bl. let.

In the same scene of the *Twelfth-Night*, *Sir Toby* sings a scrap of an old ballad, which is preserved in the Pepys Collection (vol. i. pp. 33, 496), but as it is not only a poor dull performance, but also very long, it will be sufficient here to give the first stanza:

The Ballad of Constant Susanna.

There dwelt a man in Babylon
Of reputation great by fame;
He took to wife a faire womàn,
Susanna she was callde by name:
[Pg 210] A woman fair and vertuous;
Lady, lady:
Why should we not of her learn thus
To live godly?

If this song of *Corydon*, &c. has not more merit, it is at least an evil of less magnitude.

[Dr. Rimbault refers to an earlier copy of this song in a rare musical volume entitled *The First Booke of Ayres, composed by Robert Jones*, 1601, where it is accompanied by the original music for four voices. This tune appears to have been a very popular one, and several Scottish songs are to be sung to the "toon of sal I let her go." The air is also to be found in a Dutch collection of Songs published at Haarlem in 1626.

In Brome's comedy of *The Jovial Crew*, acted in 1641 at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, there is an allusion perhaps to this song:

"Let her go, let her go,
I care not if I have her, I have her or no."]



Farewell, dear love; since thou wilt needs be gone,
Mine eyes do shew, my life is almost done.
Nay I will never die, so long as I can spie
There be many mo, though that she doe goe,
There be many mo, I fear not:5
Why then let her goe, I care not.

Farewell, farewell; since this I find is true,
I will not spend more time in wooing you:
But I will seek elsewhere, if I may find love there:
Shall I bid her goe? what and if I doe?10
Shall I bid her goe and spare not?
O no, no, no, I dare not.

Ten thousand times farewell;—yet stay a while:—
Sweet, kiss me once; sweet kisses time beguile:14
[Pg 211] I have no power to move. How now am I in love?
Wilt thou needs be gone? Go then, all is one.
Wilt thou needs be gone? Oh, hie thee!
Nay stay, and do no more deny me.

Once more adieu, I see loath to depart
Bids oft adieu to her, that holds my heart.20
But seeing I must lose thy love, which I did choose,
Goe thy way for me, since that may not be.
Goe thy ways for me. But whither?
Goe, oh, but where I may come thither.

What shall I doe? my love is now departed.25
She is as fair, as she is cruel-hearted.
She would not be intreated, with prayers oft repeated,
If she come no more, shall I die therefore?

If she come no more, what care I?

Faith, let her goe, or come, or tarry.³⁰

XI.

GERNUTUS THE JEW OF VENICE.



In the "*Life of Pope Sixtus V.* translated from the Italian of Greg. Leti, by the Rev. Mr. Farnsworth, folio," is a remarkable passage to the following effect:

"It was reported in Rome, that Drake had taken and plundered St. Domingo in Hispaniola, and carried off an immense booty. This account came in a private letter to Paul Secchi, a very considerable merchant in the city, who had large concerns in those parts, which he had insured. Upon receiving this news, he sent for the insurer Sampson Ceneda, a Jew, and acquainted him with it. The Jew, whose interest it was to have such a report thought false, gave many reasons why it could not possibly be true, and at last worked himself into such a passion, that he said, I'll lay you a pound of flesh it is a lye. Secchi, who was of a fiery hot temper,[Pg 212] replied, I'll lay you a thousand crowns against a pound of your flesh that it is true. The Jew accepted the wager, and articles were immediately executed betwixt them, That, if Secchi won, he should himself cut the flesh with a sharp knife from whatever part of the Jew's body he pleased. The truth of the account was soon confirmed; and the Jew was almost distracted, when he was informed, that Secchi had solemnly swore he would compel him to an exact performance of his contract. A report of this transaction was brought to the Pope, who sent for the parties, and, being informed of the whole affair, said, When contracts are made, it is but just they should be fulfilled, as this shall: Take a knife, therefore, Secchi, and cut a pound of flesh from any part you please of the Jew's body. We advise you, however, to be very careful; for, if you cut but a scruple more or less than your due, you shall certainly be hanged."

The editor of that book is of opinion that the scene between Shylock and Antonio in the *Merchant of Venice* is taken from this incident. But Mr. Warton, in his ingenious *Observations on the Faerie Queen*, vol. i. p. 128, has referred it to the following ballad. Mr. Warton thinks this ballad was written before Shakespeare's play, as being not so circumstantial, and having more of the nakedness of an original. Besides, it differs from the play in many circumstances, which a meer copyist, such as we may suppose the ballad-maker to be, would hardly have given himself the trouble to alter. Indeed he expressly informs us that he had his story from the Italian writers. See the *Connoisseur*, vol. i. No. 16.

After all, one would be glad to know what authority *Leti* had for the foregoing fact, or at least for connecting it with the taking of St. Domingo by Drake; for this expedition did not happen till 1585, and it is very certain that a play of the *Jewe*, "representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody minds of usurers," had been exhibited at the playhouse called the *Bull* before the year 1579, being mentioned in Steph. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*,[\[866\]](#) which was printed in that year.

As for Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, the earliest edition known of it is in quarto 1600; though it had been exhibited in the year 1598, being mentioned, together with eleven others of his plays, in Meres's *Wits Treasury*, &c. 1598, 12mo. fol. 282.

Since the first edition of this book was printed, the editor hath had reason to believe that both *Shakespeare* and the author of this ballad are indebted for their story of the Jew (however they came by it) to an Italian novel, which was first printed at Milan in the year 1558, in a book intituled, *Il Pecorone, nel quale si contengono Cinquanta Novelle antiche*, &c.

republished at Florence about [Pg 213]the year 1748, or 9.[\[867\]](#) The author was *Ser. Giovanni Fiorentino*, who wrote in 1378; thirty years after the time in which the scene of Boccace's *Decameron* is laid. (Vid. *Manni, Istoria del Decamerone di Giov. Boccac.* 4to. Fior. 1744.)

That Shakespeare had his plot from the novel itself, is evident from his having some incidents from it, which are not found in the ballad: and I think it will also be found that he borrowed from the ballad some hints that were not suggested by the novel. (See pt. ii. ver. 25, &c. where, instead of that spirited description of *the whetted blade*, &c. the prose narrative coldly says, "The Jew had prepared a razor, &c." See also some other passages in the same piece.) This however is spoken with diffidence, as I have at present before me only the abridgement of the novel which Mr. *Johnson* has given us at the end of his Commentary on Shakespeare's Play. The translation of the Italian story at large is not easy to be met with, having I believe never been published, though it was printed some years ago with this title,—"*The Novel*, from which the *Merchant of Venice* written by Shakespeare is taken, translated from the Italian. To which is added a translation of a novel from the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio. London, Printed for M. Cooper, 1755, 8vo."

The following is printed from an ancient black-letter copy in the Pepys collection,[\[868\]](#) intitled, "A New Song, shewing the crueltie of *Gernutus*, a *Jewe*, who, lending to a merchant an hundred crowns, would have a pound of his fleshe, because he could not pay him at the time appointed. To the tune of Black and Yellow."

[This is the first of four ballads printed by Percy as probable sources for the plots of four of Shakspeare's plays, but as we are unable to fix any satisfactory date for the first appearance of the ballads, it is well-nigh impossible to settle their claim to such distinction.

The story of the Jew who bargained for a pound of a Christian's flesh in payment of his debt is so widely spread, that there is no necessity for us to believe that Shakspeare used this rather poor ballad, more especially as it is probable from the extract from Gosson mentioned above that Shakspeare found the two plots of the bond and the caskets already joined together. There is, however, something in Percy's note about the whetting of the knife in verses 25-26, and it would be quite in accordance with the poet's constant practice for him to take this one point from the ballad of Gernutus. The ballad was probably versified from one of the many stories extant, because, even if it be later than Shakspeare's [Pg 214]play, it is impossible to believe that the ballad-writer could have written so bald a narration had he had the *Merchant of Venice* before him.

Some forms of the story are to be found in Persian, and there is no doubt that the original tale is of Eastern origin. The oldest European forms are in the English *Cursor Mundi* and *Gesta Romanorum*, and the French romance of *Dolopathos*. See Miss Toulmin Smith's paper "On the Bond-story in the *Merchant of Venice*," "Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society," 1875-6 p. 181. Professor Child prints a ballad entitled *The Northern Lord and Cruel Jew* (*English and Scottish Ballads*, vol. viii. p. 270), which contains the same incident of the "bloody minded Jew."

[Leti's character as an historian stands so low that his story may safely be dismissed as a fabrication.]

The First Part.



In Venice towne not long agoe

A cruel Jew did dwell,
Which lived all on usurie,
As Italian writers tell.

Gernutus called was the Jew,⁵
Which never thought to dye,
Nor ever yet did any good
To them in streets that lie.

His life was like a barrow hogge,^[869]
That liveth many a day,¹⁰
Yet never once doth any good,
Until men will him slay.

Or like a filthy heap of dung,
That lyeth in a whoard;^[870]
Which never can do any good,¹⁵
Till it be spread abroad.

So fares it with the usurer,
He cannot sleep in rest,
For feare the thiefe will him pursue
[Pg 215] To plucke him from his nest.²⁰

His heart doth thinke on many a wile,
How to deceive the poore;
His mouth is almost ful of mucke,
Yet still he gapes for more.

His wife must lend a shilling,²⁵
For every weeke a penny,
Yet bring a pledge, that is double worth,
If that you will have any.

And see, likewise, you keepe your day,
Or else you loose it all:³⁰
This was the living of the wife,
Her cow she did it call.^[871]

Within that citie dwelt that time
A marchant of great fame,
Which being distressed in his need,³⁵
Unto Gernutus came:

Desiring him to stand his friend
For twelve month and a day,
To lend to him an hundred crownes:
And he for it would pay⁴⁰

Whatsoever he would demand of him,
And pledges he should have.
No, (quoth the Jew with flearing[\[872\]](#) lookes)
Sir, aske what you will have.
[Pg 216]

No penny for the loane of it⁴⁵
For one year you shall pay;
You may doe me as good a turne,
Before my dying day.
But we will have a merry jeast,
For to be talked long;⁵⁰
You shall make me a bond, quoth he,
That shall be large and strong:
And this shall be the forfeiture;
Of your owne fleshe a pound.
If you agree, make you the bond,⁵⁵
And here is a hundred crownes.
With right good will! the marchant says:
And so the bond was made.
When twelve month and a day drew on
That backe it should be payd,⁶⁰
The marchants ships were all at sea,
And money came not in;
Which way to take, or what to doe
To thinke he doth begin:
And to Gernutus strait he comes⁶⁵
With cap and bended knee,
And sayde to him, Of curtesie
I pray you beare with mee.
My day is come, and I have not
The money for to pay;⁷⁰
And little good the forfeiture
Will doe you, I dare say.
With all my heart, Gernutus sayd,
Commaund it to your minde:
In thinges of bigger waight then this⁷⁵
You shall me ready finde.
[Pg 217]
He goes his way; the day once past

Gernutus doth not slacke
To get a sergiant presently;
And clapt him on the backe80

And layd him into prison strong,
And sued his bond withall;
And when the judgement day was come,
For judgement he did call.

The marchants friends came thither fast,85
With many a weeping eye,
For other means they could not find,
But he that day must dye.

The Second Part.

"Of the Jews crueltie; setting foorth the mercifulnesse of the Judge towards the Marchant. To the tune of *Blacke and Yellow*."



Some offered for his hundred crownes
Five hundred for to pay;
And some a thousand, two or three,
Yet still he did deny.[\[873\]](#)

And at the last ten thousand crownes5
They offered, him to save.
Gernutus sayd, I will no gold:
My forfeite I will have.

A pound of fleshe is my demand,
And that shall be my hire.10
Then sayd the judge, Yet, good my friend,
Let me of you desire
[\[Pg 218\]](#)

To take the flesh from such a place,
As yet you let him live:
Do so, and lo! an hundred crownes15
To thee here will I give.

No: no: quoth he; no: judgment here:
For this it shall be tride,
For I will have my pound of fleshe

From under his right side.20

It grieved all the companie

His crueltie to see,

For neither friend nor foe could helpe

But he must spoyled bee.

The bloudie Jew now ready is25

With whetted blade in hand,[\[874\]](#)

To spoyle the blood of innocent,

By forfeit of his bond.

And as he was about to strike

In him the deadly blow:30

Stay (quoth the judge) thy crueltie;

I charge thee to do so.

Sith needs thou wilt thy forfeit have;

Which is of flesh a pound:

See that thou shed no drop of blood,35

Nor yet the man confound.[\[875\]](#)

For if thou doe, like murderer,

Thou here shalt hanged be:

Likewise of flesh see that thou cut

No more than longes[\[876\]](#) to thee:40

[Pg 219]

For if thou take either more or lesse

To the value of a mite,

Thou shalt be hanged presently,

As is both law and right.

Gernutus now waxt franticke mad,45

And wotes[\[877\]](#) not what to say;

Quoth he at last, Ten thousand crownes,

I will that he shall pay;

And so I graunt to set him free.

The judge doth answere make;50

You shall not have a penny given;

Your forfeiture now take.

At the last he doth demaund

But for to have his owne.

No, quoth the judge, doe as you list,55

Thy judgement shall be showne.

Either take your pound of flesh, quoth he,

Or cancell me your bond.
O cruell judge, then quoth the Jew,
That doth against me stand!60
And so with griping grieved mind[878]
He biddeth them fare-well.
'Then' all the people prays'd the Lord,
That ever this heard tell.
Good people, that doe heare this song,65
For trueth I dare well say,
That many a wretch as ill as hee
Doth live now at this day;
That seeketh nothing but the spoyle
Of many a wealthey man,70
And for to trap the innocent
[Pg 220] Deviseth what they can.
From whome the Lord deliver me,
And every Christian too,
And send to them like sentence eke75
That meaneth so to do.

XII.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE.



This beautiful sonnet is quoted in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, act iii. sc. 1, and hath been usually ascribed (together with the *Reply*) to Shakespeare himself by the modern editors of his smaller poems. A copy of this madrigal, containing only four stanzas (the 4th and 6th being wanting), accompanied with the first stanza of the answer, being printed in "*The Passionate Pilgrime, and Sonnets to sundry notes of Musicke*, by Mr. William Shakespeare, Lond. printed for W. Jaggard, 1599." Thus was this sonnet, &c. published as Shakespeare's in his lifetime.

And yet there is good reason to believe that (not Shakespeare, but) *Christopher Marlow* wrote the song, and *Sir Walter Raleigh* the *Nymph's Reply*: For so we are positively assured by Isaac Walton, a writer of some credit, who has inserted them both in his *Compleat Angler*,[879] under the character of "that smooth song, which was made by Kit. Marlow, now at least fifty years ago; and ... an Answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in his younger days.... Old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good."—It also passed for Marlow's in the opinion of his contemporaries; for in the old poetical miscellany, intituled *England's Helicon*, it is printed with the name of *Chr. Marlow* subjoined to it; and the *Reply* is subscribed *Ignoto*, which is known to have been a signature of *Sir Walter Raleigh*. With the same signature *Ignoto*, in that collection, is an imitation of Marlow's beginning thus:

"Come live with me, and be my dear,
And we will revel all the year,
In plains and groves, &c."

Upon the whole I am inclined to attribute them to *Marlow*, and *Raleigh*; notwithstanding the authority of Shakespeare's Book of Sonnets. For it is well known that as he took no care of his own compositions, so was he utterly regardless what spurious things were fathered upon him. Sir *John Oldcastle*, *The London Prodigal*, and *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, were printed with his name at full length in the title-pages, while he was living, which yet were afterwards rejected by his first editors *Heminge* and *Condell*, who were his intimate friends (as he mentions both in his will), and therefore no doubt had good authority for setting them aside.[\[880\]](#)

The following sonnet appears to have been (as it deserved) a great favourite with our earlier poets: for, besides the imitation above-mentioned, another is to be found among *Donne's* Poems, intitled *The Bait*, beginning thus:

"Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands, &c."

As for *Chr. Marlow*, who was in high repute for his dramatic writings, he lost his life by a stab received in a brothel, before the year 1593. See A. Wood, i. 138.

[These exquisite poems by Christopher Marlowe and Sir Walter Raleigh at once became popular favourites, and were often reprinted. The earliest appearance of the first was in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. An imperfect copy was printed by W. Jaggard with the *Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, and the first stanza of the *Reply* was then added to it. In the following year both poems were correctly printed in *England's Helicon*, the first being signed "Chr. Marlow" and the second "Ignoto." When Walton introduced the poems into his *Angler* he attributed the *Reply* to Raleigh, and printed an additional stanza to each as follows:—

Passionate Shepherd (after verse 20).

"Thy silver dishes for thy meat
As precious as the gods do eat
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me."

[Pg 222]

Nymph's Reply (after verse 20).

"What should we talk of dainties then
Of better meat than's fit for men?
These are but vain, that's only good
Which God hath blest and sent for food."

In the Roxburghe Collection of Ballads (i. 205) is a street ballad in which these two songs are united and entitled *A most excellent ditty of the Lover's promises to his beloved, with the Lady's prudent answer to her Love*. The verses referred to above as added by Walton are here printed, but they take the place of verses 17 to 20 of each song respectively.

Mr. Chappell and Dr. Rimbault have both drawn attention to the proofs of the popularity of Marlowe's song to be found in out of the way places. In *Choice, Chance, and Change, or Conceits in their Colours* (1606), Tidero being invited to live

with his friend, replies, "Why, how now? do you take me for a woman, that you come upon me with a ballad of *Come live with me and be my love*?" In *The World's Folly*, 1609, there is the following passage: "But there sat he, hanging his head, lifting up the eyes, and with a deep sigh singing the ballad of *Come live with me and be my love*, to the tune of *Adew my deere*." Nicholas Breton refers to it in 1637 as "the old song," but Walton considered it fresh enough to insert in his *Angler* in 1653, although Marlowe had then been dead sixty years.]



Come live with me, and be my love,
And we wil all the pleasures prove
That hils and vallies, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks,⁵
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses
With a thousand fragrant posies,¹⁰
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Imbrodered all with leaves of mirtle;

[Pg 223]

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Slippers lin'd choicely for the cold;¹⁵
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw, and ivie buds,
With coral clasps, and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Then live with me, and be my love.²⁰

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

The Nymph's Reply.





If that the World and Love were young,
 And truth in every shepherd's tounge,
 These pretty pleasures might me move
 To live with thee, and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,⁵
 When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold,
 And Philomel becometh dumb,
 And all complain of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
 To wayward winter reckoning yield:¹⁰
 A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
 Is fancies spring, but sorrows fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
 Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
 Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,¹⁵
 In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw, and ivie buds,
 Thy coral clasps, and amber studs;
 [Pg 224] All these in me no means can move
 To come to thee, and be thy love.²⁰

But could youth last, and love still breed,
 Had joyes no date, nor age no need;
 Then those delights my mind might move
 To live with thee, and be thy love.

XIII.

TITUS ANDRONICUS'S COMPLAINT.



The reader has here an ancient ballad on the same subject as the play of *Titus Andronicus*, and it is probable that the one was borrowed from the other: but which of them was the original it is not easy to decide. And yet, if the argument offered above for the priority of the ballad of the *Jew of Venice* may be admitted, somewhat of the same kind may be urged here; for this ballad differs from the play in several particulars, which a simple ballad-writer would be less likely to alter than an inventive tragedian. Thus in the ballad is no mention of the contest for the empire between the two brothers, the composing of which makes the ungrateful treatment of *Titus* afterwards the more flagrant: neither is there any notice taken of his sacrificing one of Tamora's sons, which the tragic poet has assigned as the original cause of all her cruelties. In the play *Titus* loses twenty-one of his sons in war, and kills another for assisting *Bassianus* to carry off *Lavinia*: the reader will

find it different in the ballad. In the latter she is betrothed to the emperor's son: in the play to his brother. In the tragedy only two of his sons fall into the pit, and the third being banished returns to Rome with a victorious army, to avenge the wrongs of his house: in the ballad all three are entrapped and suffer death. In the scene the emperor kills Titus, and is in return stabbed by Titus's surviving son. Here Titus kills the emperor, and afterwards himself.

Let the reader weigh these circumstances and some others wherein he will find them unlike, and then pronounce for himself. After all, there is reason to conclude that this play was rather improved by Shakespeare with a few fine touches of his pen, than originally written by him; for, not to mention that the style is less figurative[Pg 225] than his others generally are, this tragedy is mentioned with discredit in the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, in 1614, as one that had then been exhibited "five and twenty or thirty years:" which, if we take the lowest number, throws it back to the year 1589, at which time Shakespeare was but 25: an earlier date than can be found for any other of his pieces:[881] and if it does not clear him entirely of it, shews at least it was a first attempt.[882]

The following is given from a copy in *The Golden Garland* intitled as above; compared with three others, two of them in black letter in the Pepys Collection, intitled, *The Lamentable and Tragical History of Titus Andronicus, &c.* To the tune of, *Fortune*. Printed for E. Wright. Unluckily none of these have any dates.

[No original from which the plot of the play of *Titus Andronicus* could be taken has yet been discovered, and it is just possible that this ballad may have given the hint, but the Registers of the Stationers' Company go some way towards proving a negative to this supposition, for on the 6th of February, 1593-4, John Danter registered *A noble Roman Historie of Tytus Andronicus*, and also *the ballad thereof*.]



You noble minds, and famous martiall wights,
That in defence of native country fights,
Give eare to me, that ten yeeres fought for Rome,
Yet reapt disgrace at my returning home.

[Pg 226]

In Rome I lived in fame fulle threescore yeeres,5
My name beloved was of all my peeres;
Full five and twenty valiant sonnes I had,
Whose forward vertues made their father glad.

For when Romes foes their warlike forces bent,
Against them stille my sonnes and I were sent;10
Against the Goths full ten yeeres weary warre
We spent, receiving many a bloody scarre.

Just two and twenty of my sonnes were slaine
Before we did returne to Rome againe:
Of five and twenty sonnes, I brought but three15
Alive, the stately towers of Rome to see.

When wars were done, I conquest home did bring,
And did present my prisoners to the king,
The queene of Goths, her sons, and eke a moore,
Which did such murders, like was nere before.²⁰

The emperour did make this queene his wife,
Which bred in Rome debate and deadlie strife;
The moore, with her two sonnes did growe soe proud.
That none like them in Rome might bee allowd

The moore soe pleas'd this new-made empress' eie,²⁵
That she consented to him secretlye
For to abuse her husbands marriage bed,
And soe in time a blackamore she bred.

Then she, whose thoughts to murder were inclinde,
Consented with the moore of bloody minde³⁰
Against myselfe, my kin, and all my friendes,
In cruell sort to bring them to their endes.

Soe when in age I thought to live in peace,
Both care and griefe began then to increase:
Amongst my sonnes I had one daughter bright,³⁵
Which joy'd, and pleased best my aged sight;
[Pg 227]

My deare Lavinia was betrothed than
To Cesars sonne, a young and noble man:
Who in a hunting by the emperours wife,
And her two sonnes, bereaved was of life.⁴⁰

He being slaine, was cast in cruel wise,
Into a darksome den from light of skies:
The cruell moore did come that way as then
With my three sonnes, who fell into the den.

The moore then fetcht the emperour with speed,⁴⁵
For to accuse them of that murderous deed;
And when my sonnes within the den were found,
In wrongfull prison they were cast and bound.

But nowe, behold! what wounded most my mind,
The empresses two sonnes of savage kind⁵⁰
My daughter ravished without remorse,
And took away her honour, quite perforce.

When they had tasted of soe sweete a flowre,
Fearing this sweete should shortly turne to sowre,

They cutt her tongue, whereby she could not tell⁵⁵

How that dishonoure unto her befell.

Then both her hands they basely cutt off quite,

Whereby their wickednesse she could not write;

Nor with her needle on her sampler sowe

The bloudye workers of her direfull woe.⁶⁰

My brother Marcus found her in the wood,

Staining the grassie ground with purple blood,

That trickled from her stumpes, and bloudlesse armes:

Noe tongue at all she had to tell her harmes.

But when I sawe her in that woefull case,⁶⁵

With teares of blood I wet mine aged face:

For my Lavinia I lamented more

Then for my two and twenty sonnes before.

[Pg 228]

When as I sawe she could not write nor speake,

With grief mine aged heart began to breake;⁷⁰

We spread an heape of sand upon the ground,

Whereby those bloody tyrants out we found.

For with a staffe, without the helpe of hand,

She writt these wordes upon the plat of sand:

"The lustfull sonnes of the proud emperesse⁷⁵

Are doers of this hateful wickednesse."

I tore the milk-white hairs from off mine head,

I curst the houre, wherein I first was bred,

I wisht this hand, that fought for cuntry's fame,

In cradle rockt, had first been stricken lame.⁸⁰

The moore delighting still in villainy

Did say, to sett my sonnes from prison free

I should unto the king my right hand give,

And then my three imprisoned sonnes should live.

The moore I caus'd to strike it off with speede,⁸⁵

Whereat I grieved not to see it bleed,

But for my sonnes would willingly impart,

And for their ransome send my bleeding heart.

But as my life did linger thus in paine,

They sent to me my bootlesse hand againe,⁹⁰

And therewithal the heades of my three sonnes,

Which filld my dying heart with fresher moanes.

Then past reliefe I upp and downe did goe,
And with my tears writ in the dust my woe:
I shot my arrowes[883] towards heaven hie,95
And for revenge to hell did often crye.

The empresse then, thinking that I was mad,
Like furies she and both her sonnes were clad,
(She nam'd Revenge, and Rape and Murder they)
[Pg 229] To undermine and heare what I would say.100

I fed their foolish veines[884] a certaine space,
Untill my friendes did find a secret place,
Where both her sonnes unto a post were bound,
And just revenge in cruell sort was found.

I cut their throates, my daughter held the pan105
Betwixt her stumpes, wherein the bloud it ran:
And then I ground their bones to powder small,
And made a paste for pyes streight therewithall.

Then with their fleshe I made two mighty pyes,
And at a banquet servde in stately wise:110
Before the empresse set this loathsome meat;
So of her sonnes own flesh she well did eat.

Myselfe bereav'd my daughter then of life,
The empresse then I slewe with bloody knife,
And stabb'd the emperour immediatelie,115
And then myself: even soe did Titus die.

Then this revenge against the Moore was found,
Alive they sett him halfe into the ground,
Whereas he stood untill such time he starv'd.
And soe God send all murderers may be serv'd.120

[Pg 230]



XIV.

TAKE THOSE LIPS AWAY.



The first stanza of this little sonnet, which an eminent critic[\[885\]](#) justly admires for its extreme sweetness, is found in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, act iv. sc. 1. Both the stanzas are preserved in Beaum. and Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*, act v. sc. 2. Sewel and Gildon have printed it among Shakespeare's smaller poems, but they have done the same by twenty other pieces that were never writ by him; their book being a wretched heap of inaccuracies and mistakes. It is not found in Jaggard's old edition of Shakespeare's *Passionate Pilgrim*,[\[886\]](#) &c.

[The second stanza is an evident addition by another and inferior hand, so that Percy's expression above—"both the stanzas are preserved"—gives a false impression.]



Take, oh take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworne;
And those eyes, the breake of day,
Lights, that do misleade the morne:
But my kisses bring againe,5
Seales of love, but seal'd in vaine
Hide, oh hide those hills of snowe,
Which thy frozen bosom beares,
On whose tops the pinkes that growe,
Are of those that April wears:10
But first set my poor heart free,
Bound in those icy chains by thee.

[Pg 231]

XV.

KING LEIR AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS.



The reader has here an ancient ballad on the subject of *King Lear*, which (as a sensible female critic has well observed[\[887\]](#)) 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[\[888\]](#) 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 Shakespeare 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 intituled, *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 Shakespeare 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 Shakespeare concurs with this ballad.

But to form a true judgement of Shakespeare's merit, the curious reader should cast his eye over that previous sketch; which he will find printed at the end of *The Twenty Plays of Shakespeare*, republished from the quarto impressions by *George Steevens*, Esq.; with such elegance and exactness as led us to expect that fine edition of all the works of our great dramatic poet, which he hath since published.

The following ballad is given from an ancient copy in the *Golden [Pg 232] Garland*, bl. let. intitled, *A lamentable song of the Death of King Leir and his Three Daughters. To the tune of When flying Fame.*

[The old play referred to above, although printed as late as the year 1605, was probably only a re-impression of a piece entered in the *Stationers' Register* in 1594, as it was a frequent practice of the publishers to take advantage of the popularity of Shakspeare's plays on the stage, by publishing dramas having somewhat the same titles as his.

The Cordella of the play is softened in the ballad to Cordelia, the form used by Shakspeare and Spenser, but the name Ragan is retained in place of Shakspeare's Regan.]



King Leir once ruled 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,¹⁰
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 troth¹⁵
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:20
And for your sake my bleeding heart
Shall here be cut in twain,
Ere that I see your reverend age
The smallest grief sustain.
[Pg 233]

And so will I, the second said;25
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;30
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,35
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.40

And wilt thou shew 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,45
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,50
To whom I equally bestow
My kingdom and my land,
My pompal state and all my goods,
That lovingly I may
With those thy sisters be maintain'd55
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:60

[Pg 234] 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 France65

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,70

With full consent of all his court

He made his wife and queen.

Her father king Leir this while

With his two daughters staid:

Forgetful of their promis'd loves,75

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.80

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;85

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 have90

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,95

And will relieve my woe.

[Pg 235]

Full fast he hies then to her court;

Where when she heard his moan

Return'd him answer, That she griev'd

That all his means were gone:100
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,105
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;110
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 court115
(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.120

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 relief125
He wandred up and down;
Being glad to feed on beggars food,
That lately wore a crown.

And calling to remembrance then
His youngest daughters words,130
That said the duty of a child
Was all that love affords:
[Pg 236] But doubting to repair to her,
Whom he had banish'd so,
Grew frantick mad; for in his mind135
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.140

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 possess with discontents,145
He passed o're to France,
In hopes from fair Cordelia there,
To find some gentler chance;
Most virtuous dame! which when she heard
Of this her father's grief,150
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 brought155
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.160

And so to England came with speed,
To repossesse king Leir,
And drive his daughters from their thrones
By his Cordelia dear.
Where she, true-hearted noble queen,165
Was in the battle slain:
Yet he good king, in his old days,
Possess his crown again.

[Pg 237]

But when he heard Cordelia's death,
Who died indeed for love170
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,175
That was so truly hearted.

The lords and nobles when they saw
The end of these events,
The other sisters unto death
They doomed by consents;180

And being dead, their crowns they left

Unto the next of kin:

Thus have you seen the fall of pride,

And disobedient sin.

XVI.

YOUTH AND AGE,



Is found in the little collection of Shakespeare's Sonnets, intituled the *Passionate Pilgrime*,[\[889\]](#) the greatest part of which seems to relate to the amours of Venus and Adonis, being little effusions of fancy, probably written while he was composing his larger poem on that subject. The following seems intended for the mouth of Venus, weighing the comparative merits of youthful Adonis and aged Vulcan. In the *Garland of Good Will* it is reprinted, with the addition of four more such stanzas, but evidently written by a meaner pen.

[Pg 238]



Crabbed Age and Youth
Cannot live together;
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care:
Youth like summer morn,⁵
Age like winter weather,
Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare:
Youth is full of sport,
Ages breath is short;¹⁰
Youth is nimble, Age is lame:
Youth is hot and bold,
Age is weak and cold;
Youth is wild, and Age is tame.
Age, I do abhor thee,¹⁵
Youth, I do adore thee;
O, my love, my love is young:
Age, I do defie thee;
Oh sweet shepheard, hie thee,

XVII.

THE FROLICKSOME DUKE, OR THE TINKER'S GOOD FORTUNE.



The following ballad is upon the same subject as the *Induction* to Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*: whether it may be thought to have suggested the hint to the dramatic poet, or is not rather of later date, the reader must determine.

The story is told[890] of *Philip the Good*, Duke of Burgundy; and is thus related by an old English writer: "The said Duke, at the [Pg 239]marriage of Eleonora, sister to the king of Portugall, at Bruges in Flanders, which was solemnised in the deepe of winter; when as by reason of unseasonable weather he could neither hawke nor hunt, and was now tired with cards, dice, &c. and such other domestick sports, or to see ladies dance; with some of his courtiers, he would in the evening walke disguised all about the towne. It so fortun'd, as he was walking late one night, he found a countrey fellow dead drunke, snorting on a bulke; he caused his followers to bring him to his palace, and there stripping him of his old clothes, and attyring him after the court fashion, when he wakened, he and they were all ready to attend upon his excellency, and persuade him that he was some great Duke. The poor fellow admiring how he came there, was served in state all day long: after supper he saw them dance, heard musicke, and all the rest of those court-like pleasures: but late at night, when he was well tiple'd, and again fast asleepe, they put on his old robes, and so conveyed him to the place, where they first found him. Now the fellow had not made them so good sport the day before, as he did now, when he returned to himself: all the jest was to see how he looked upon it. In conclusion, after some little admiration, the poore man told his friends he had seen a vision; constantly believed it; would not otherwise be persuaded, and so the jest ended." Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, pt. ii. sect. 2. Memb. 4, 2nd ed. 1624, fol.

This ballad is given from a black-letter copy in the Pepys Collection, which is intitled as above. "To the tune of *Fond Boy*."

[The story of this ballad is of Eastern origin, and is the same as the tale of *the Sleeper awakened* in the *Arabian Nights*. The story crops up in many places, some of which are pointed out in Prof. Child's *English and Scottish Ballads* (vol. viii. p. 54). The question, however, of its origin is not of immediate interest in the discussion of Shakspeare's plots, because the author of the old play, *Taming of a Shrew*, had already used the subject and named the tinker Slie, so that we have not far to seek for Shakspeare's original.]



Now as fame does report a young duke keeps a court,
One that please his fancy with frolicksome sport:
But amongst all the rest, here is one I protest,
Which will make you to smile when you hear the true jest:

[Pg 240] A poor tinker he found, lying drunk on the ground,5
As secure in a sleep as if laid in a swoond.

The duke said to his men, William, Richard, and Ben,
Take him home to my palace, we'll sport with him then.
O'er a horse he was laid, and with care soon convey'd
To the palace, altho' he was poorly arrai'd:10
Then they stript off his cloaths, both his shirt, shoes and hose,
And they put him to bed for to take his repose.

Having pull'd off his shirt, which was all over durt,
They did give him clean holland, this was no great hurt:
On a bed of soft down, like a lord of renown,15
They did lay him to sleep the drink out of his crown.
In the morning when day, then admiring he lay,
For to see the rich chamber both gaudy and gay.

Now he lay something late, in his rich bed of state,
Till at last knights and squires they on him did wait;20
And the chamberling bare, then did likewise declare,
He desir'd to know what apparel he'd ware:
The poor tinker amaz'd, on the gentleman gaz'd,
And admired how he to this honour was rais'd.

Tho' he seem'd something mute, yet he chose a rich suit,25
Which he straitways put on without longer dispute;
With a star on his side, which the tinker offt ey'd,
And it seem'd for to swell him 'no' little with pride;
For he said to himself, Where is Joan my sweet wife?
Sure she never did see me so fine in her life.30

From a convenient place, the right duke his good grace
Did observe his behaviour in every case
To a garden of state, on the tinker they wait,
Trumpets sounding before him: thought he, this is great:
[Pg 241] Where an hour or two, pleasant walks he did view,35
With commanders and squires in scarlet and blew.

A fine dinner was drest, both for him and his guests,
He was plac'd at the table above all the rest,
In a rich chair 'or bed,' lin'd with fine crimson red,
With a rich golden canopy over his head:40
As he sat at his meat, the musick play'd sweet,
With the choicest of singing his joys to compleat.

While the tinker did dine, he had plenty of wine,
Rich canary with sherry and tent superfine.

Like a right honest soul, faith, he took off his bowl,45
Till at last he began for to tumble and roul
From his chair to the floor, where he sleeping did snore,
Being seven times drunker than ever before.
Then the duke did ordain, they should strip him amain,
And restore him his old leather garments again:50
'Twas a point next the worst, yet perform it they must,
And they carry'd him strait, where they found him at first;
Then he slept all the night, as indeed well he might;
But when he did waken, his joys took their flight.

For his glory 'to him' so pleasant did seem,55
That he thought it to be but a meer golden dream;
Till at length he was brought to the duke, where he sought
For a pardon, as fearing he had set him at nought;
But his highness he said, Thou'rt a jolly bold blade,
Such a frolick before I think never was plaid.60

Then his highness bespoke him a new suit and cloak,
Which he gave for the sake of this frolicksome joak;
Nay, and five-hundred pound, with ten acres of ground,
Thou shalt never, said he, range the counteries round,
[Pg 242] Crying old brass to mend, for I'll be thy good friend,65
Nay, and Joan thy sweet wife shall my duchess attend.

Then the tinker reply'd, What! must Joan my sweet bride
Be a lady in chariots of pleasure to ride?
Must we have gold and land ev'ry day at command?
Then I shall be a squire I well understand:70
Well I thank your good grace, and your love I embrace,
I was never before in so happy a case.

XVIII.

THE FRIAR OF ORDERS GRAY.



Dispersed thro' Shakespeare's plays are innumerable little fragments of ancient ballads, the entire copies of which could not be recovered. Many of these being of the most beautiful and pathetic simplicity, the Editor was tempted to select some of them, and with a few supplemental stanzas to connect them together, and form them into a little *tale*, which is here submitted to the reader's candour.

One small fragment was taken from Beaumont and Fletcher.

[Ritson exhibits a bit of grim humour in his *Ancient Songs*, vol. ii. ed. 1829, p. 64, where he prints a parody of Percy's *Friar of Orders Gray*, under the title of the *Jovial Tinker*, and prefixes to it the exact words that Percy uses above. The parody commences—

"It was a jovial tinker,
All of the north countrie,
As he walk'd forth, along the way
He sung right merrily."]



It was a friar of orders gray
Walkt forth to tell his beades;
And he met with a lady faire
Clad in a pilgrime's weedes.

[Pg 243]

Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar,⁵
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?¹⁰
O by his cockle hat, and staff,
And by his sandal shoone.[\[891\]](#)

But chiefly by his face and mien,
That were so fair to view;
His flaxen locks that sweetly curl'd,¹⁵
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 turfe,
And at his heels a stone.²⁰

Within these holy cloysters long
He languisht, and he dyed,
Lamenting of a ladyes love,
And 'playning of her pride.

Here bore him barefac'd on his bier²⁵
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!30

And didst thou dye for love of me!

Break, cruel heart of stone!

[Pg 244]

O weep not, lady, weep not soe;

Some ghostly comfort seek:

Let not vain sorrow rive thy heart,35

Ne teares bedew thy cheek.

O do not, do not, holy friar,

My sorrow now reprove;

For I have lost the sweetest youth,

That e'er wan ladyes love.40

And nowe, alas! for thy sad losse,

I'll evermore weep and sigh;

For thee I only wisht to live,

For thee I wish to dye.

Weep no more, lady, weep no more,45

Thy sorrowe is in vaine:

For violets pluckt the sweetest showers

Will ne'er make grow againe.

Our joys as winged dreams doe flye,

Why then should sorrow last?50

Since grief but aggravates thy losse,

Grieve not for what is past.

O say not soe, thou holy friar;

I pray thee, say not soe:

For since my true-love dyed for mee,55

'Tis meet my tears should flow.

And will he ne'er come again?

Will he ne'er come again?

Ah! no, he is dead and laid in his grave,

For ever to remain.60

His cheek was redder than the rose;

The comliest youth was he!

But he is dead and laid in his grave:

Alas, and woe is me!

[Pg 245]

Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more,65

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;70

For young men ever were fickle found,

Since summer trees were leafy.

Now say not so, thou holy friar,

I pray thee say not soe;

My love he had the truest heart:75

O he was ever true!

And art thou dead, thou much-lov'd youth,

And didst thou dye for mee?

Then farewell home; for ever-more

A pilgrim I will bee.80

But first upon my true-loves 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; rest awhile85

Beneath this cloyster wall:

See through the hawthorn blows the cold wind.

And drizzly rain doth fall.

O stay me not, thou holy friar;

O stay me not, I pray;90

No drizzly 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 gray95

Thy owne true-love appears.

[Pg 246]

Here forc'd by grief, and hopeless love,

These holy weeds I sought;

And here amid these lonely walls

To end my days I thought.100

But haply for my year of grace[\[892\]](#)

Is not yet past away,

Might I still hope to win thy love,
No longer would I stay.
Now farewell grief, and welcome joy¹⁰⁵
Once more unto my heart;
For since I have found thee, lovely youth,
We never more will part.

✱ As the foregoing song has been thought to have suggested to our late excellent Poet *Dr. Goldsmith*, the plan of his beautiful ballad of *Edwin and Emma* (first printed in his *Vicar of Wakefield*) it is but justice to his memory to declare, 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 the second volume of this Work, which the Doctor had much admired in manuscript, and has finely improved. See vol. ii. book i. song xiv. ver. 37.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK

[Pg 247]



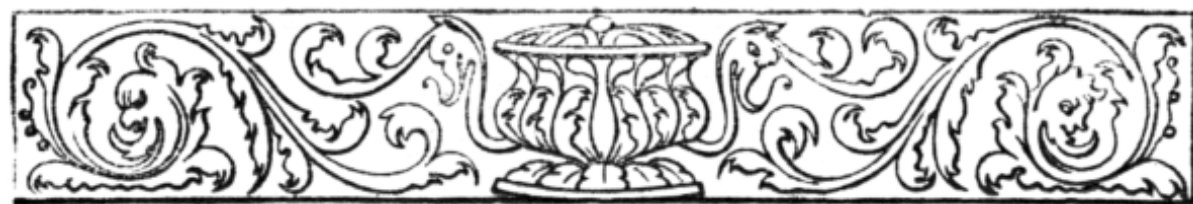
RELIQUES OF ANCIENT POETRY, ETC.

SERIES THE FIRST.

BOOK III.

[Pg 248]

[Pg 249]



I.

THE MORE MODERN BALLAD OF CHEVY CHACE.



At the beginning of this volume we gave the old original Song of *Chevy Chace*. The reader has here the more improved

edition of that fine heroic ballad. It will afford an agreeable entertainment to the curious to compare them together, and to see how far the latter bard has excelled his predecessor, and where he has fallen short of him. For tho' he has every where improved the versification, and generally the sentiment and diction; yet some few passages retain more dignity in the ancient copy; at least the obsoleteness of the style serves as a veil to hide whatever might appear too familiar or vulgar in them. Thus, for instance, the catastrophe of the gallant Witherington is in the modern copy exprest in terms which never fail at present to excite ridicule: whereas in the original it is related with a plain and pathetic simplicity, that is liable to no such unlucky effect: See the stanza in page [32](#), which, in modern orthography, &c. would run thus.

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

So again the stanza which describes the fall of Montgomery is somewhat more elevated in the ancient copy:

"The dint it was both sad and sore,
He on Montgomery set:
The swan-feathers his arrow bore
With his hearts blood were wet."

p. [31](#).

We might also add, that the circumstances of the battle are more clearly conceived and the several incidents more distinctly[Pg 250] marked in the old original, than in the improved copy. It is well known that the ancient English weapon was the long bow, and that this nation excelled all others in archery; while the Scottish warriors chiefly depended on the use of the spear: this characteristic difference never escapes our ancient bard, whose description of the first onset is to the following effect:

"The proposal of the two gallant earls to determine the dispute by single combat being over-ruled; the English, says he, who stood with their bows ready bent, gave a general discharge of their arrows, which slew seven score spearmen of the enemy: but, notwithstanding so severe a loss, Douglas like a brave captain kept his ground. He had divided his forces into three columns, who, as soon as the English had discharged the first volley, bore down upon them with their spears, and breaking through their ranks reduced them to close fighting. The archers upon this dropt their bows and had recourse to their swords, and there followed so sharp a conflict, that multitudes on both sides lost their lives." In the midst of this general engagement, at length, the two great earls meet, and after a spirited rencounter agree to breathe; upon which a parley ensues, that would do honour to Homer himself.

Nothing can be more pleasingly distinct and circumstantial than this: whereas, the modern copy, tho' in general it has great merit, is here unluckily both confused and obscure. Indeed the original words seem here to have been totally misunderstood. "Yet bydys the yerl Douglas upon the *Bent*," evidently signifies, "Yet the earl Douglas abides in the *Field*:" whereas the more modern bard seems to have understood by *Bent*, the inclination of his mind, and accordingly runs quite off from the subject[\[893\]](#):

"To drive the deer with hound and horn
Earl Douglas had the bent."

v. 109.

One may also observe a generous impartiality in the old original bard, when in the conclusion of his tale he represents

both nations as quitting the field without any reproachful reflection on either: though he gives to his own countrymen the credit of being the smaller number.

"Of fifteen hundred archers of England
Went away but fifty and three;
Of twenty hundred spearmen of Scotland,
But even five and fifty."

p. [32](#).

[Pg 251]

He attributes *Flight* to neither party, as hath been done in the modern copies of this ballad, as well Scotch as English. For, to be even with our latter bard, who makes the Scots to *flee*, some reviser of North Britain has turned his own arms against him, and printed an edition at Glasgow, in which the lines are thus transposed:

"Of fifteen hundred Scottish speirs
Went hame but fifty-three:
Of twenty hundred Englishmen
Scarce fifty-five did flee."

And to countenance this change he has suppressed the two stanzas between ver. 240 and ver. 249.—From that Edition I have here reformed the Scottish names, which in the modern English ballad appeared to be corrupted.

When I call the present admired ballad modern, I only mean that it is comparatively so; for that it could not be writ much later than the time of Q. Elizabeth, I think may be made appear; nor yet does it seem to be older than the beginning of the last century.[\[894\]](#) Sir Philip Sidney, when he complains of the antiquated phrase of *Chevy Chase*, could never have seen this improved copy, the language of which is not more ancient than that he himself used. It is probable that the encomiums of so admired a writer excited some bard to revise the ballad, and to free it from those faults he had objected to it. That it could not be much later than that time, appears from the phrase *doleful dumps*: which in that age carried no ill sound with it, but to the next generation became ridiculous. We have seen it pass uncensured in a sonnet that was at that time in request, and where it could not fail to have been [\[Pg 252\]](#)taken notice of, had it been in the least exceptionable: see above, book ii. song v. ver. 2. Yet, in about half a century after, it was become burlesque. Vide *Hudibras*, Part I. c. 3, v. 95.

This much premised, the reader that would see the general beauties of this ballad set in a just and striking light, may consult the excellent criticism of Mr. Addison.[\[895\]](#) With regard to its subject: it has already been considered in page [20](#). The conjectures there offered will receive confirmation from a passage in the *Memoirs of Carey Earl of Monmouth*, 8vo. 1759, p. 165; whence we learn that it was an ancient custom with the borderers of the two kingdoms, when they were at peace, to send to the Lord Wardens of the opposite Marches for leave to hunt within their districts. If leave was granted, then towards the end of summer they would come and hunt for several days together "with their *greyhounds for deer*:" but if they took this liberty unpermitted, then the Lord Warden of the border so invaded, would not fail to interrupt their sport and chastise their boldness. He mentions a remarkable instance that happened while he was Warden, when some Scotch gentlemen coming to hunt in defiance of him, there must have ensued such an action as this of Chevy Chace, if the intruders had been proportionably numerous and well-armed; for, upon their being attacked by his men at arms, he tells us, "some hurt was done, tho' he had given especiall order that they should shed as little blood as possible." They were in effect overpowered and taken prisoners, and only released on their promise to abstain from such licentious sporting for the future.

Since the former impression of these volumes hath been published, a new edition of *Collins's Peerage*, 1779, &c., 9 Vols. 8vo. which contains, in volume ii. p. 334, an historical passage, which may be thought to throw considerable light on the subject of the preceding ballad: viz.

"In this ... year, 1436, according to Hector Boethius, was fought the Battle of Pepperden, not far from the Cheviot Hills, between the Earl of Northumberland (IId Earl, son of Hotspur,) and Earl William Douglas, of Angus, with a small army of about four thousand men each, in which the latter had the advantage. As this seems to have been a private conflict between these two great chieftains of the Borders, rather than a national war, it has been thought to have given rise to the celebrated old Ballad of *Chevy-Chace*; which, to render it more pathetic and interesting, has been heightened with tragical incidents wholly fictitious." See *Ridpath's Border Hist.* 4to, p. 401.

The following text is given from a copy in the Editor's folio MS. [Pg 253]compared with two or three others printed in black-letter.—In the second volume of *Dryden's Miscellanies* may be found a translation of Chevy-Chace into Latin rhymes. The translator, Mr. Henry Bold, of New College, undertook it at the command of Dr. Compton, bishop of London; who thought it no derogation to his episcopal character, to avow a fondness for this excellent old ballad. See the preface to *Bold's Latin Songs*, 1685, 8vo.

[The following version varies in certain particulars from the one in the MS. folio (ed. Hales and Furnivall, 1867, vol. ii. p. i), and the most important variations are noted at the foot of the page. Some of the alterations in the arrangement of the words are improvements, but others are the reverse, for instance verses 129-132. Percy follows the copy printed in the *Collection of Old Ballads*, 1723 (vol. i. p. 108), much more closely than the MS.]



God prosper long our noble king,

Our lives and safetyes all!

A woefull hunting once there did[\[896\]](#)

In Chevy-Chace befall;

To drive the deere with hound and horne,⁵

Erle Percy took his way;[\[897\]](#)

The child may rue that is unborne,

The hunting of that day.

The stout Erle of Northumberland

A vow to God did make,¹⁰

His pleasure in the Scottish woods

Three summers days to take;

The cheefest harts in Chevy-Chace

To kill and beare away.

These tydings to Erle Douglas came,¹⁵

In Scotland where he lay:

[Pg 254]

Who sent Erle Percy present word,
He wold prevent his sport.
The English Erle, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort²⁰

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,²⁵
To chase the fallow deere:
On munday they began to hunt,
Ere day-light did appeare;

And long before high noone they had
An hundred fat buckes slaine;³⁰
Then having dined, the drovyers went
To rouze the deare againe.

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure;
Theire backsides all, with speciall care,³⁵
That day were guarded sure.[\[898\]](#)

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deere to take,[\[899\]](#)
That with their cryes the hills and dales
[Pg 255] An eccho shrill did make.⁴⁰

Lord Percy to the quarry[\[900\]](#) went,
To view the slaughter'd deere;[\[901\]](#)
Quoth he, Erle Douglas promised
This day to meet me heere:

But if I thought he wold not come,⁴⁵
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;⁵⁰
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
All marching in our sight;

All men of pleasant Tivydale,
Fast by the river Tweede:
O cease your sports, Erle Percy said,⁵⁵

And take your bowes with speede;

And now with me, my countrymen,

Your courage forth advance;

For there was never champion yett,

In Scotland or in France,⁶⁰

That ever did on horsebacke come,

But if my hap^[902] it were,

I durst encounter man for man,

With him to break a spere.

Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,⁶⁵

Most like a baron bold,

Rode formost of his company,

Whose armour shone like gold.

[Pg 256]

Show me, sayd hee, whose men you bee,

That hunt soe boldly heere,⁷⁰

That, without my consent, doe chase

And kill my fallow-deere.

The first man that did answer make,

Was noble Percy hee;

Who sayd, Wee list not to declare,⁷⁵

Nor shew whose men wee bee:

Yet wee will spend our deerest blood,

Thy cheefest harts to slay.

Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,

And thus in rage did say,⁸⁰

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,⁸⁵

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.⁹⁰

Accurst bee [he], Erle Percy sayd,

By whome this is denied.^[903]

Then stept a gallant squier forth,

Witherington was his name,
Who said, I wold not have it told⁹⁵
To Henry our king for shame,
That ere my captaine fought on foote,
And I stood looking on.[\[904\]](#)
You bee two erles, sayd Witherington,
And I a squier alone:¹⁰⁰
[Pg 257]

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 hart and hand.
Our English archers bent their bowes,[\[905\]](#)¹⁰⁵
Their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
Full four-score Scots they slew.
[\[906\]](#)[Yet bides Earl Douglas on the bent,[\[907\]](#)

As Chieftain stout and good.¹¹⁰
As valiant Captain, all unmov'd
The shock he firmly stood.
His host he parted had in three,
As Leader ware and try'd,
As soon his spearmen on their foes¹¹⁵
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:¹²⁰
And throwing strait their bows away,
They grasp'd their swords so bright:
And now sharp blows, a heavy shower,
On shields and helmets light.]
[Pg 258]

They closed full fast on everye side,¹²⁵
Noe slacknes there was found;
And many a gallant gentleman
Lay gasping on the ground.
O Christ! it was a grieve to see,[\[908\]](#)
And likewise for to heare,¹³⁰

The cries of men lying in their gore,
And scattered here and there.

At last these two stout erles did meet,
Like captaines of great might:
Like lyons wood,[\[909\]](#) they layd on lode,135
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 feelee.140

Yeeld thee, O 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,145
And this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight,
That ever I did see.

[Pg 259]

Noe, Douglas, quoth Erle Percy then,
Thy proffer I doe scorne;150
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,[\[910\]](#)155
A deepe and deadlye blow:

Who never spake more words than these,[\[911\]](#)
Fight on, my merry men all;
For why, my life is at an end;
Lord Percy sees my fall.160

Then leaving liffe, Erle Percy tooke
The dead man by the hand;
And said, Erle Douglas, for thy life[\[912\]](#)
Wold I had lost my land.

O Christ! my verry hart doth bleed165
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure, a more redoubted knight
Mischance cold never take.

A knight amongst the Scotts there was,
Which saw Erle Douglas dye,170
Who streight in wrath did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy:

Sir Hugh Mountgomery was he call'd,
Who, with a spere most bright,
Well-mounted on a gallant steed,175
Ran fiercely through the fight;
[Pg 260]

And past the English archers all,
Without all dread or feare;
And through Earl Percyes body then
He thrust his hatefull spere;180

With such a 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,185
Whose courage none could staine:
An English archer then perceiv'd
The noble erle was slaine;

He had a bow bent in his hand,[\[913\]](#)
Made of a trusty tree;190
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew hee:[\[914\]](#)

Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
So right the shaft he sett,
The grey goose-winge that was thereon,195
In his harts bloode was wett.

This fight did last from breake of day,
Till setting of the sun;
For when they rung the evening-bell,[\[915\]](#)
The battel scarce was done.200

With stout Erle Percy, there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,[\[916\]](#)
Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,[\[917\]](#)
[Pg 261] Sir James that bold barrôn:

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,205
Both knights of good account,

Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slaine,
Whose prowesse did surmount.

For Witherington needs must I wayle,
As one in doleful dumpes;[\[918\]](#)210
For when his leggs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumpes.

And with Erle Douglas, there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
Sir Charles Murray, that from the feeld[\[919\]](#)215
One foote wold never flee.

Sir Charles Murray, of Ratcliff, too,[\[920\]](#)
His sisters sonne was hee;
Sir David Lamb, so well esteem'd,[\[921\]](#)
Yet saved cold not bee.220

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,225
Went home but fifty-three;
The rest were slaine in Chevy-Chase,
Under the greene woode tree.

[Pg 262]

Next day did many widdowes come,
Their husbands to bewayle;230
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
But all wold not prevayle.

Theyr bodyes, bathed in purple gore,[\[922\]](#)
They bare with them away:
They kist them dead a thousand times,235
Ere they were cladd in clay.

The newes was brought to Eddenborrow,
Where Scottlands king did raigne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddenlye
Was with an arrow slaine:240

O heavy newes, King James did say,
Scotland may witnesse bee,
I have not any captaine more
Of such account as hee.

Like tydings to King Henry came,245

Within as short a space,

That Percy of Northumberland

Was slaine in Chevy-Chese:

Now God be with him, said our king,

Sith it will noe better bee;250

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,255

For brave Erle Percyes sake.

This vow full well the king perform'd

After, at Humbledowne;

In one day, fifty knights were slayne,

With lords of great renowne:260

[Pg 263]

And of the rest, of small account,

Did many thousands dye:[923]

Thus endeth the hunting of Chevy-Chase,

Made by the Erle Percy.

God save our king, and bless this land265

With plenty, joy, and peace;

And grant henceforth, that foule debate

'Twixt noblemen may cease.



The surnames in the foregoing Ballad are altered, either by accident or design, from the old original copy, and in common editions extremely corrupted. They are here rectified, as much as they could be. Thus,

[Ver. 202, *Egerton*.] This name is restored (instead of *Ogerton*, com. ed.) from the Editor's folio MS. The pieces in that MS. appear to have been collected, and many of them composed (among which might be this ballad) by an inhabitant of Cheshire; who was willing to pay a compliment here to one of his countrymen, of the eminent family *De* or *Of Egerton* (so the name was first written) ancestors of the present Duke of Bridgwater: and this he could do with the more propriety, as the *Percies* had formerly great interest in that county. At the fatal battle of Shrewsbury all the flower of the Cheshire gentlemen lost their lives fighting in the cause of *Hotspur*.

[Ver. 203, *Ratcliff*.] This was a family much distinguished in Northumberland. *Edw. Radcliffe, mil.* was sheriff of that county in the 17 of Hen. VII. and others of the same surname afterwards. (See *Fuller*, p. 313.) Sir *George Ratcliff*, Knt.

was one of the commissioners of inclosure in 1552. (See *Nicholson*, p. 330.) Of this family was the late Earl of *Derwentwater*, who was beheaded in 1715. The Editor's folio MS. however, reads here, *Sir Robert Harcliffe and Sir William*.

The *Harcleys* were an eminent family in Cumberland. (See *Fuller*, p. 224.) Whether this may be thought to be the same name, I do not determine.

[Pg 264]

[Ver. 204. *Baron*.] This is apparently altered, (not to say corrupted) from *Hearone*, in p. 32, ver. 114.

[Ver. 207. *Raby*.] This might be intended to celebrate one of the ancient possessors of *Raby Castle*, in the county of Durham. Yet it is written *Rebbye*, in the fol. MS. and looks like a corruption of *Rugby* or *Rokeby*, an eminent family in Yorkshire, see pp. [32](#), [52](#). It will not be wondered that the *Percies* should be thought to bring followers out of that county, where they themselves were originally seated, and had always such extensive property and influence. [\[924\]](#)

[Ver. 215. *Murray*.] So the Scottish copy. In the com. edit. it is *Carrel* or *Currel*; and *Morrell* in the fol. MS.

[Ver. 217. *Murray*.] So the Scot. edit.—The common copies read *Murrel*. The fol. MS. gives the line in the following peculiar manner,

"Sir Roger Heuer of Harcliffe too."

[Ver. 219. *Lamb*.] The folio MS. has

"Sir David Lambwell, well esteemed."

This seems evidently corrupted from *Lwdale* or *Liddell*, in the old copy, see ver. 125. (pp. 32, 52).

II.

DEATH'S FINAL CONQUEST.



These fine moral stanzas were originally intended for a solemn funeral song, in a play of James Shirley's, intitled, "The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses:" [\[925\]](#) no date, 8vo.—Shirley flourished as a dramatic writer early in the reign of Charles I.: but he outlived the Restoration. His death happened October 29, 1666. Æt. 72.

[Pg 265]

This little poem was written long after many of these that follow, but is inserted here as a kind of Dirge to the foregoing piece. It is said to have been a favourite song with K. Charles II. [to whom, according to Oldys, it was often sung by "old" Bowman.]



The glories of our birth and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate:
Death lays his icy hands on kings:
Scepter and crown⁵
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:¹⁰
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still.
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,¹⁵
When they pale captives creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow,
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar now
See where the victor victim bleeds:²⁰
All heads must come
To the cold tomb,
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.

[Pg 266]

III. THE RISING IN THE NORTH.



The subject of this ballad is the great Northern Insurrection in the 12th year of Elizabeth, 1569; which proved so fatal to Thomas Percy, the seventh Earl of Northumberland.

There had not long before been a secret negotiation entered into between some of the Scottish and English nobility, to bring about a marriage between Mary Q. of Scots, at that time a prisoner in England, and the Duke of Norfolk, a nobleman of excellent character, and firmly attached to the Protestant religion. This match was proposed to all the most considerable of the English nobility, and among the rest to the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, two noblemen very powerful in the North. As it seemed to promise a speedy and safe conclusion of the troubles in Scotland, with many advantages to the crown of England, they all consented to it, provided it should prove agreeable to Q. Elizabeth. The Earl

of Leicester (Elizabeth's favourite) undertook to break the matter to her, but before he could find an opportunity, the affair had come to her ears by other hands, and she was thrown into a violent flame. The Duke of Norfolk, with several of his friends, was committed to the Tower, and summons were sent to the Northern Earls instantly to make their appearance at court. It is said that the Earl of Northumberland, who was a man of a mild and gentle nature, was deliberating with himself whether he should not obey the message, and rely upon the queen's candour and clemency, when he was forced into desperate measures by a sudden report at midnight, Nov. 14, that a party of his enemies were come to seize on his person. [926] The Earl was then at his house at Topcliffe in Yorkshire. When rising hastily out of bed, he withdrew to the Earl of Westmoreland, at Brancepeth, where the country came in to them, and pressed them to take arms in their own defence. They accordingly set up their standards, declaring their intent was to restore the ancient religion, to get the succession of the crown firmly settled, and to prevent the destruction of the ancient nobility, &c. Their common banner [927] (on [Pg 267] which was displayed the cross, together with the five wounds of Christ) was borne by an ancient gentleman, Richard Norton, Esq., of Norton-conyers; who, with his sons (among whom, Christopher, Marmaduke, and Thomas, are expressly named by Camden), distinguished himself on this occasion. Having entered Durham, they tore the Bible, &c., and caused mass to be said there: they then marched on to Clifford-moor near Wetherby, where they mustered their men. Their intention was to have proceeded on to York, but, altering their minds, they fell upon Barnard's castle, which Sir George Bowes held out against them for eleven days. The two earls, who spent their large estates in hospitality, and were extremely beloved on that account, were masters of little ready money; the E. of Northumberland bringing with him only 8000 crowns, and the E. of Westmoreland nothing at all for the subsistence of their forces, they were not able to march to London, as they had at first intended. In these circumstances, Westmoreland began so visibly to despond, that many of his men slunk away, tho' Northumberland still kept up his resolution, and was master of the field till December 13, when the Earl of Sussex, accompanied with Lord Hunsden and others, having marched out of York at the head of a large body of forces, and being followed by a still larger army under the command of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, the insurgents retreated northward towards the borders, and there dismissing their followers, made their escape into Scotland. Tho' this insurrection had been suppressed with so little bloodshed, the Earl of Sussex and Sir George Bowes, marshal of the army, put vast numbers to death by martial law, without any regular trial. The former of these caused sixty-three constables to be hanged at once. And the latter made his boast, that, for sixty miles in length, and forty in breadth, betwixt Newcastle and Wetherby, there was hardly a town or village wherein he had not executed some of the inhabitants. This exceeds the cruelties practised in the West after Monmouth's rebellion: but that was not the age of tenderness and humanity.

Such is the account collected from Stow, Speed, Camden, Guthrie, Carte, and Rapin; it agrees in most particulars with the following ballad, which was apparently the production of some northern minstrel, who was well affected to the two noblemen. It is here printed from two MS. copies, one of them in the Editor's folio collection. They contained considerable variations, out of which such readings were chosen as seemed most poetical and consonant to history.

[The Northern Rebellion of 1569 has been nobly commemorated in verse. Besides the two following ballads there is the one entitled the *Earle of Westmorlande*, in the folio MS. which was printed for [Pg 268] the first time in 1867, and also Wordsworth's matchless poem of the *White Doe of Rylstone*. Those readers who wish for further particulars respecting this ill-starred insurrection, should see Mr. Hales's interesting introduction to the *Earl of Westmoreland* (Folio MS., ed. Hales and Furnivall, vol. i. p. 292).

Percy acknowledges above that he has not followed the folio MS. very closely, and his variations will be seen by comparing his version with the copy now printed at the end.]





Listen, lively lordings all,
Lithe and listen unto mee,
And I will sing of a noble earle,
The noblest earle in the north countrie.

Earle Percy is into his garden gone,⁵
And after him walkes his faire ladie:[\[928\]](#)
I heard a bird sing in mine eare,
That I must either fight, or flee.

Now heaven forefend, my dearest lord,
That ever such harm should hap to thee:¹⁰
But goe to London to the court,
And faire fall truth and honestie.

Now nay, now nay, my ladye gay,
Alas! thy counsell suits not mee;
Mine enemies prevail so fast,¹⁵
That at the court I may not bee.

O goe to the court yet, good my lord,
And take thy gallant men with thee:
If any dare to doe you wrong,
Then your warrant they may bee.²⁰
[Pg 269]

Now nay, now nay, thou lady faire,
The court is full of subtiltie;
And if I goe to the court, lady,
Never more I may thee see.

Yet goe to the court, my lord, she sayes,²⁵
And I myselfe will ryde wi' thee:
At court then for my dearest lord,
His faithfull borrowe[\[929\]](#) I will bee

Now nay, now nay, my lady deare;
Far lever[\[930\]](#) had I lose my life,³⁰
Than leave among my cruell foes
My love in jeopardy and strife.

But come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come thou hither unto mee,
To maister Norton thou must goe³⁵
In all the haste that ever may bee.

Commend me to that gentlemàn,
And beare this letter here fro mee;
And say that earnestly I praye,
He will ryde in my companie.40

One while the little foot-page went,
And another while he ran;
Untill he came to his journeyes end,
The little foot-page never blan.[\[931\]](#)

When to that gentleman he came,45
Down he kneeled on his knee;
And tooke the letter betwixt his hands,
And lett the gentleman it see.

And when the letter it was redd
Affore that goodlye companye,50
I wis, if you the truthe wold know,
There was many a weeping eye.
[Pg 270]

He sayd, Come thither, Christopher Norton,
A gallant youth thou seemst to bee;
What doest thou counsell me, my sonne,55
Now that good erle's in jeopardy?

Father, my counselle's fair and free;
That erle he is a noble lord,
And whatsoever to him you hight,
I wold not have you breake your word.60

Gramercy, Christopher, my sonne,
Thy counsell well it liketh mee,
And if we speed and scape with life,
Well advanced shalt thou bee.

Come you hither, my nine good sonnes,[\[932\]](#)65
Gallant men I trowe you bee:
How many of you, my children deare,
Will stand by that good erle and mee?

Eight of them did answer make,
Eight of them spake hastilie,70
O father, till the daye we dye
We'll stand by that good erle and thee.

Gramercy now, my children deare,
You showe yourselves right bold and brave;

And whetherso'er I live or dye,75

A fathers blessing you shal have.

But what sayst thou, O Francis Norton,

Thou art mine eldest sonn and heire:

Somewhat lyes brooding in thy breast;

Whatever it bee, to mee declare.80

[Pg 271]

Father, you are an aged man,

Your head is white, your bearde is gray;

It were a shame at these your yeares

For you to ryse in such a fray.

Now fye upon thee, coward Francis,85

Thou never learnedst this of mee:

When thou wert yong and tender of age,

Why did I make soe much of thee?

But, father, I will wend with you,

Unarm'd and naked will I bee;90

And he that strikes against the crowne,

Ever an ill death may he dee.

Then rose that reverend gentleman,

And with him came a goodlye band

To join with the brave Erle Percy,95

And all the flower o' Northumberland.

With them the noble Nevill came,

The erle of Westmorland was hee:

At Wetherbye they mustred their host,

Thirteen thousand faire to see.100

Lord Westmorland his ancyent[\[933\]](#) raisde,

The Dun Bull he rays'd on hye,

And three Dogs with golden collars

Were there sett out most royallye.[\[934\]](#)

[Pg 272]

Erle Percy there his ancyent spred,105

The Halfe-Moone shining all soe faire:[\[935\]](#)

The Nortons ancyent had the crosse,

And the five wounds our Lord did beare.

Then Sir George Bowes he straitwaye rose,

After them some spoyle to make:110

Those noble erles turn'd backe againe,

And aye they vowed that knight to take.

[Pg 273]

The baron he to his castle fled,

To Barnard castle then fled hee.

The uttermost walles were eathe[\[936\]](#) to win,115

The earles have wonne them presentlie.

The uttermost walles were lime and bricke;

But thoughe they won them soon anone,

Long e'er they wan the innermost walles,

For they were cut in rocke of stone.120

Then newes unto leeve[\[937\]](#) London came

In all the speede that ever might bee,

And word is brought to our royall queene

Of the rysing in the North countrie.

Her grace she turned her round about,125

And like a royall queene shee swore,[\[938\]](#)

I will ordayne them such a breakfast,

As never was in the North before.

Shee caus'd thirty thousand men berays'd,

With horse and harneis[\[939\]](#) faire to see;130

She caused thirty thousand men be raised,

To take the earles i'th' North countrie.

Wi' them the false Erle Warwick went,

Th' erle Sussex and the lord Hunsdèn;

Untill they to Yorke castle came135

I wiss, they never stint ne blan.[\[940\]](#)

Now spred thy ancyent, Westmorland,

Thy dun bull faine would we spye:

And thou, the Erle o' Northumberland,

Now rayse thy half moone up on hye.140

[Pg 274]

But the dun bulle is fled and gone,

And the halfe moone vanished away:

The Erles, though they were brave and bold,

Against soe many could not stay.

Thee, Norton, wi' thine eight good sonnes,145

They doom'd to dye, alas! for ruth!

Thy reverend lockes thee could not save,

Nor them their faire and blooming youthe.

Wi' them full many a gallant wight
They cruellye bereav'd of life:150
And many a childe made fatherlesse,
And widowed many a tender wife.



[The following version of this ballad is from the Folio MS (ed. Hales and Furnivall, 1867, vol. ii. p. 210.)

Listen liuely lordings all,
and all that beene this place within!
if youle giue eare vnto my songe,
I will tell you how this geere did begin.4

It was the good Erle of Westmorlande,
a noble Erle was called hee;
and he wrought treason against the crowne;
alas, itt was the more pittye!8

and soe itt was the Erle of Northumberland,
another good Noble Erle was hee,
they tooke both vpon on part,
against their crowne they wolden bee.12

Earle Percy is into his garden gone,
and after walks his awne ladye;
"I heare a bird sing in my eare
that I must either ffight or fflee."16

[Pg 275]

"God fforbidd," shee sayd, "good my Lord,
that euer soe that it shalbee!
but goe to London to the court,
and faire ffall truth and honestye!"20

"but nay, now nay, my Ladye gay,
that euer it shold soe bee;
my treason is knowen well enoughe;
att the court I must not bee."24

"but goe to the Court! yet, good my Lord,

take men enowe with thee;

if any man will doe you wronge,

your warrant they may bee."28

"but nay, now nay, my Lady gay,

for soe itt must not bee;

If I goe to the court, Ladye,

death will strike me, and I must dye."32

"but goe to the Court! yett, [good] my Lord,

I my-selfe will ryde with thee;

if any man will doe you wronge,

your borrow I shalbee."36

"but nay, now nay, my Lady gay,

for soe it must not bee;

for if I goe to the Court, Ladye,

thou must me neuer see.40

"but come hither, thou litle footpage,

come thou hither vnto mee,

for thou shalt goe a Message to Master Norton

in all the hast that euer may bee:44

"comend me to that gentleman;

bring him here this letter from mee,

and say, 'I pray him earnestlye

that hee will ryde in my companye.'"48

but one while the foote page went,

another while he rann;

vntill he came to Master Norton,

the ffoot page neuer blanne;52

and when he came to Master Nortton

he kneeled on his knee,

and tooke the letter betwixt his hands,

and lett the gentleman it see.56

[Pg 276]

and when the letter itt was reade

affore all his companye,

I-wis, if you wold know the truth,

there was many a weeping eye.60

he said, "come hither, Kester Nortton,

a ffine ffellow thou seemes to bee;

some good counsell, Kester Nortton,

this day doe thou giue to mee."64

"Marry, Ile giue you counsell, ffather,
if youle take counsell att me,
that if you haue spoken the word, father,
that backe againe you doe not flee."68

"god amercy, Christopher Nortton,
I say, god amercye!

if I doe liue and scape with liffe,
well advanced shalt thou bee;72

"but come you hither, my nine good sonnes,
in mens estate I thinke you bee;
how many of you, my children deare,
on my part that wilbe?"76

but eight of them did answer soone,
and spake ffull hastilye,
sayes "we willbe on your part, ffather,
till the day that we doe dye."80

"but god amercy, my children deare,
and euer I say god amercy!
and yett my blessing you shall have,
whether-so euer I liue or dye.84

"but what sayst thou, thou ffrancis Nortton,
mine eldest sonne and mine heyre trulye?
some good counsell, ffrancis Nortton,
this day thou giue to me."88

"but I will giue you counsell, ffather,
if you will take counsell att mee;
for if you wold take my counsell, father,
against the crowne you shold not bee."92

"but ffye vpon thee, ffrancis Nortton!
I say ffye vpon thee!

when thou was younge and tender of age
I made ffull much of thee."96

[Pg 277]

"but your head is white, ffather," he sayes,
"and your beard is wonderous gray;
itt were shame ffor your countrye
if you shold rise and fflee away."100

"but ffye vpon thee, thou coward ffrancis!

thou neuer tookest that of mee!

when thou was younge and tender of age

I made too much of thee."104

"but I will goe with you, father," Quoth hee;

"like a naked man will I bee;

he that strikes the first stroake against the crowne,

an ill death may hee dye!"108

but then rose vpp Master Nortton that Esquier

with him a ffull great companye;

and then the Erles they comen downe

to ryde in his companye.112

att whethersbye thé mustered their men

vpon a ffull fayre day;

13000 there were seene

to stand in battel ray.116

the Erle of Westmoreland, he had in his ancyeat

the Dume bull in sight most hye,

and 3 doggs with golden collers

were sett out royallye.120

the Erle of Northumberland, he had in his ancyeat

the halfe moone in sight soe hye,

as the Lord was crucifyed on the crosse,

and sett forthe pleasantlye.124

and after them did rise good Sir George Bowes,

after them a spoyle to make;

the Erles returned backe againe,

thought euer that Knight to take128

this Barron did take a Castle then,

was made of lime and stone;

the vttermost walls were ese to be woon;

the Erles haue woon them anon;132

but tho they woone the vttermost walls

quickly and anon,

the innermost walles thé cold not winn,

thé were made of a rocke of stone.136

[Pg 278]

but newes itt came to leeue London

in all they speede that euer might bee;

and word it came to our royall Queene

of all the rebells in the north countrye.140

shee turned her grace then once about,
and like a royall Queene shee sware,
sayes, "I will ordaine them such a breake-fast
as was not in the North this 1000 yeere!"144

shee caused 30000 men to be made
with horsse and harneis all quicklye;
and shee caused 30000 men to be made
to take the rebells in the North countrye.148

they took with them the false Erle of Warwicke,
soe did they many another man;
vntill they came to yorke Castle,
I-wis they neuer stinted nor blan.152

"spread thy ancyent, Erle of Westmoreland!
The halfe moone ffaine wold wee see!"
but the halfe moone is fled and gone,
and the Dun bull vanished awaye;156
and ffrancis Nortton and his 8 sonnes
are ffled away most cowardlye.

Ladds with mony are counted men
men without mony are counted none;160
but hold your tounge! why say you soe?
men wilbe men when mony is gone.

ffins.]

[Pg 279]



IV.

NORTHUMBERLAND BETRAYED BY DOUGLAS.



This ballad may be considered as the sequel of the preceding. After the unfortunate Earl of Northumberland had seen himself forsaken of his followers, he endeavoured to withdraw into Scotland, but falling into the hands of the thievish borderers, was stript and otherwise ill-treated by them. At length he reached the house of Hector, of Harlaw, an

Armstrong, with whom he hoped to lie concealed: for, Hector had engaged his honour to be true to him, and was under great obligations to this unhappy nobleman. But this faithless wretch betrayed his guest for a sum of money to Murray the Regent of Scotland, who sent him to the castle of Lough-leven, then belonging to William Douglas. All the writers of that time assure us that Hector, who was rich before, fell shortly after into poverty, and became so infamous, that *to take Hector's cloak*, grew into a proverb to express a man who betrays his friend. See Camden, Carleton, Holinshed, &c.

Lord Northumberland continued in the castle of Lough-leven till the year 1572; when James Douglas, Earl of Morton, being elected Regent, he was given up to the Lord Hunsden at Berwick, and being carried to York suffered death. As Morton's party depended on Elizabeth for protection, an elegant historian thinks "it was scarce possible for them to refuse putting into her hands a person who had taken up arms against her. But, as a sum of money was paid on that account, and shared between Morton and his kinsman Douglas, the former of whom, during his exile in England, had been much indebted to Northumberland's friendship, the abandoning this unhappy nobleman to inevitable destruction was deemed an ungrateful and mercenary act." Robertson's Hist.

So far history coincides with this ballad, which was apparently written by some Northern bard soon after the event. The interposal of the *witch-lady* (v. 53) is probably his own invention: yet, even this hath some countenance from history; for about 25 years before, the Lady Jane Douglas, Lady Glamis, sister of the earl of Angus, and nearly related to Douglas of Lough-leven, had suffered[Pg 280] death for the pretended crime of witchcraft; who, it is presumed, is the Witch-lady alluded to in verse 133.

The following is selected (like the former) from two copies, which contained great variations; one of them in the Editor's folio MS. In the other copy some of the stanzas at the beginning of this Ballad are nearly the same with what in that MS. are made to begin another Ballad on the escape of the E. of Westmoreland, who got safe into Flanders, and is feigned in the ballad to have undergone a great variety of adventures.

[Percy wrote the following note on the version of this ballad in his folio MS. "To correct this by my other copy which seems more modern. The other copy in many parts preferable to this." It will be seen by comparing the text with the folio MS. copy, now printed at the end, that the alterations are numerous. The first three stanzas are taken with certain changes from the ballad of "The Erle of Westmoreland" (Folio MS. vol. i. p. 300). The alterations made in them are not improvements, as, for instance, the old reading of verse 2 is—

"And keepe me heare in deadly feare,"

which is preferable to the line below—

"And harrowe me with fear and dread."]



How long shall fortune faile me nowe,
And harrowe[941] me with fear and dread?
How long shall I in bale[942] abide,
In misery my life to lead?
To fall from my bliss, alas the while!5

It was my sore and heavye lott:

And I must leave my native land,

And I must live a man forgot.

One gentle Armstrong I doe ken,

A Scot he is much bound to mee:10

He dwelleth on the border side,

To him I'll goe right privilie.

[Pg 281]

Thus did the noble Percy 'plaine,

With a heavy heart and wel-away,

When he with all his gallant men15

On Bramham moor had lost the day.

But when he to the Armstrongs came,

They dealt with him all treacherously;

For they did strip that noble earle:

And ever an ill death may they dye.20

False Hector to Earl Murray sent,

To shew him where his guest did hide:

Who sent him to the Lough-levèn,

With William Douglas to abide.

And when he to the Douglas came,25

He halched[\[943\]](#) him right curteouslie:

Say'd, Welcome, welcome, noble earle,

Here thou shalt safelye bide with mee.

When he had in Lough-leven been

Many a month and many a day;30

To the regent[\[944\]](#) the lord warden[\[945\]](#) sent,

That bannisht earle for to betray.

He offered him great store of gold,

And wrote a letter fair to see:

Saying, Good my lord, grant me my boon,35

And yield that banisht man to mee.

Earle Percy at the supper sate

With many a goodly gentleman:

The wylie Douglas then bespake,

And thus to flyte[\[946\]](#) with him began:40

[Pg 282]

What makes you be so sad, my lord,

And in your mind so sorrowfullyè?

To-morrow a shootinge will bee held

Among the lords of the North countryè.

The butts are sett, the shooting's made,45

And there will be great royaltie:

And I am sworne into my bille,[\[947\]](#)

Thither to bring my lord Percy.

I'll give thee my hand, thou gentle Douglas,

And here by my true faith, quoth hee,50

If thou wilt ryde to the worldes end,

I will ryde in thy companye.

And then bespake a lady faire,

Mary à Douglas was her name:

You shall byde here, good English lord,55

My brother is a traiterous man.

He is a traitor stout and stronge,

As I tell you in privitie:

For he hath tane liverance[\[948\]](#) of the erle,[\[949\]](#)

Into England nowe to 'liver thee.60

Now nay, now nay, thou goodly lady,

The regent is a noble lord:

Ne for the gold in all Englànd,

The Douglas wold not break his word

When the regent was a banisht man,65

With me he did faire welcome find;

And whether weal or woe betide,

I still shall find him true and kind.

[Pg 283]

Betweene England and Scotland it wold breake truce,

And friends againe they wold never bee,70

If they shold 'liver a banisht erle

Was driven out of his own countrie.

Alas! alas! my lord, she sayes,

Nowe mickle is their traitorie;

Then lett my brother ryde his wayes,75

And tell those English lords from thee,

How that you cannot with him ryde,

Because you are in an ile of the sea,[\[950\]](#)

Then ere my brother come againe

To Edenborow castle[\[951\]](#) Ile carry thee.80

To the Lord Hume I will thee bring,
He is well knowne a true Scots lord,
And he will lose both land and life,
Ere he with thee will break his word.

Much is my woe, Lord Percy sayd,85
When I thinkie on my own countrie,
When I thinke on the heavye happe[\[952\]](#)
My friends have suffered there for mee.

Much is my woe, Lord Percy sayd,
And sore those wars my minde distresse;90
Where many a widow lost her mate,
And many a child was fatherlesse.

And now that I a banisht man,
Shold bring such evil happe with mee,
To cause my faire and noble friends95
To be suspect of treacherie:

[Pg 284]

This rives[\[953\]](#) my heart with double woe;
And lever had I dye this day,
Than thinke a Douglas can be false,
Or ever he will his guest betray.100

If you'll give me no trust, my lord,
Nor unto mee no credence yield;
Yet step one moment here aside,
Ile showe you all your foes in field.

Lady, I never loved witchcraft,105
Never dealt in privy wyle;
But evermore held the high-waye
Of truth and honour, free from guile

If you'll not come yourselfe my lorde,
Yet send your chamberlaine with mee;110
Let me but speak three words with him,
And he shall come again to thee.

James Swynard with that lady went,
She showed him through the weme[\[954\]](#) of her ring
How many English lords there were115
Waiting for his master and him.

And who walkes yonder, my good lady,
So royallyè on yonder greene?

O yonder is the lord Hunsdèn:[\[955\]](#)

Alas! he'll doe you drie and teene.[\[956\]](#)120

And who beth yonder, thou gay ladye,

That walkes so proudly him beside?

That is Sir William Drury,[\[957\]](#) shee sayd,

A keene captàine hee is and tryde.

[Pg 285]

How many miles is itt, madàme,125

Betwixt yond English lords and mee?

Marry it is thrice fifty miles,

To saile to them upon the sea.

I never was on English ground,

Ne never sawe it with mine eye,130

But as my book it sheweth mee,

And through my ring I may descrye.

My mother shee was a witch ladye,

And of her skille she learned[\[958\]](#) mee;

She wold let me see out of Lough-leven135

What they did in London citie.

But who is yond, thou lady faire,

That looketh with sic an austerne[\[959\]](#) face?

Yonder is Sir John Foster,[\[960\]](#) quoth shee,

Alas! he'll do ye sore disgrace.140

He pulled his hatt down over his browe;

He wept; in his heart he was full of woe:

And he is gone to his noble Lord,

Those sorrowful tidings him to show.

Now nay, now nay, good James Swynàrd,145

I may not believe that witch ladie:

The Douglasses were ever true,

And they can ne'er prove false to mee.

I have now in Lough-leven been

The most part of these years three,150

Yett have I never had noe outrake,[\[961\]](#)

Ne no good games that I cold see.

[Pg 286]

Therefore I'll to yond shooting wend,

As to the Douglas I have hight:[\[962\]](#)

Betide me weale, betide me woe,155

He ne'er shall find my promise light.

He writhe[\[963\]](#) a gold ring from his finger,

And gave itt to that gay ladie:

Sayes, It was all that I cold save,

In Harley woods where I cold bee.[\[964\]](#)160

And wilt thou goe, thou noble lord,

Then farewell truth and honestie;

And farewell heart and farewell hand;

For never more I shall thee see.

The wind was faire, the boatmen call'd,165

And all the saylors were on borde;

Then William Douglas took to his boat,

And with him went that noble lord.

Then he cast up a silver wand,

Says, Gentle lady, fare thee well!170

The lady fett[\[965\]](#) a sigh soe deep,

And in a dead swoone down shee fell.

Now let us goe back, Douglas, he sayd,

A sickness hath taken yond faire ladie;

If ought befall yond lady but good,175

Then blamed for ever I shall bee.

Come on, come on, my lord, he sayes;

Come on, come on, and let her bee:

There's ladies enow in Lough-leven

For to cheere that gay ladie.180

[Pg 287]

If you'll not turne yourself, my lord,

Let me goe with my chamberlaine;

We will but comfort that faire lady,

And wee will return to you againe.

Come on, come on, my lord, he sayes,185

Come on, come on, and let her bee:

My sister is craftye, and wold beguile

A thousand such as you and mee.

When they had sayled[\[966\]](#) fifty myle,

Now fifty mile upon the sea;190

Hee sent his man to ask the Douglas,

When they shold that shooting see.

Faire words, quoth he, they make fooles faine,[\[967\]](#)

And that by thee and thy lord is seen:
You may hap[\[968\]](#) to thinke itt soone enough,195
Ere you that shooting reach, I ween.

Jamye his hatt pulled over his browe,
He thought his lord then was betray'd;
And he is to Erle Percy againe,
To tell him what the Douglas sayd.200

Hold upp thy head, man, quoth his lord;
Nor therefore lett thy courage fayle,
He did it but to prove thy heart,
To see if he cold make it quail.

When they had other fifty sayld,205
Other fifty mile upon the sea,
Lord Percy called to Douglas himselfe,
Sayd, What wilt thou nowe doe with mee?
[Pg 288]

Looke that your brydle be wight,[\[969\]](#) my lord,
And your horse goe swift as shipp att sea:210
Looke that your spurres be bright and sharpe,
That you may pricke her while she'll away.

What needeth this, Douglas, he sayth;
What needest thou to flyte[\[970\]](#) with mee?
For I was counted a horseman good215
Before that ever I mett with thee.

A false Hector hath my horse,
Who dealt with mee so treacherouslie:
A false Armstrong hath my spurres,
And all the geere belongs to mee.220

When they had sayled other fifty mile,
Other fifty mile upon the sea;
They landed low by Berwicke side,
A deputed 'laird' landed Lord Percy.[\[971\]](#)

Then he at Yorke was doomde to dye,225
It was, alas! a sorrowful sight:
Thus they betrayed that noble earle,
Who ever was a gallant wight.





[The following version of the Betrayal of Northumberland is from the Folio MS. (ed. Hales and Furnivall, vol. ii. p. 218.)

Now list and lithe you gentlemen,
and Ist tell you the veretye,
how they haue delt with a banished man,
driuen out of his countrye.⁴

when as hee came on Scottish ground
as woe and wonder be them amonge,
ffull much was there traitorye
thé wrought the Erle of Northumberland.⁸

when they were att the supper sett,
beffore many goodly gentlemen
thé ffell a fflouting and mocking both,
and said to the Erle of Northumberland,¹²

"What makes you be soe sad, my Lord,
and in your mind soe sorrowffullye?
in the North of Scotland to-morrow theres a shooting,
and thither thoust goe, my Lord Percy.¹⁶

"the buttes are sett, and the shooting is made,
and there is like to be great royaltie,
and I am sworne into my bill
thither to bring my Lord Percy."²⁰

"Ile giue thee my land, Douglas," he sayes,
"and be the faith in my bodye,
if that thou wilt ryde to the worlds end,
Ile ryde in thy companye."²⁴

and then bespake the good Ladye,—
Marry a Douglas was her name,—
"you shall byde here, good English Lord;
my brother is a traiterous man;²⁸

"he is a traitor stout and stronge,
as Ist tell you the veretye,
for he hath tane liuerance of the Erle,
and into England he will liuor thee."³²

"Now hold thy tounge, thou goodlye Ladye,
and let all this talking bee;
ffor all the gold thats in Loug Leuen,
william wold not Liuor mee!36
[Pg 290]

"it wold breake truce betweene England & Scotland,
and friends againe they wold neuer bee
if he shold liuor a bani[s]ht Erle
was driuen out of his owne countrie."40

"hold your tounge, my Lord," shee sayes,
"there is much ffalsehood them amonge;
when you are dead, then they are done,
soone they will part them friends againe.44

"if you will giue me any trust, my Lord,
Ile tell you how you best may bee;
youst lett my brother ryde his wayes,
and tell those English Lords trulye48

"how that you cannot with them ryde
because you are in an Ile of the sea,
then, ere my Brother come againe,
to Edenborrow castle Ile carry thee,52

"Ile liuor you vnto the Lord Hume,
and you know a trew Scothe Lord is hee,
for he hath lost both Land and goods
in ayding of your good bodye."56

"Marry! I am woe! woman," he sayes,
"that any freind fares worse for mee;
for where one saith 'it is a true tale,'
then two will say it is a Lye.60

"when I was att home in my [realme]
amonge my tennants all trulye,
in my time of losse, wherin my need stoode,
they came to ayd me honestlye;64

"therfore I left many a child ffatherlese,
and many a widdow to looke wanne;
and therfore blame nothing, Ladye,
but the woefull warres which I began."68

"If you will giue me noe trust, my Lord,
nor noe credence you will give mee,

and youle come hither to my right hand,
indeed, my Lord, Ile lett you see."72

saies, "I neuer loued noe witchcraft,
nor neuer dealt with treacherye,
but euermore held the hye way;
alas! that may be seene by mee!"76

[Pg 291]

"if you will not come your selfe, my Lord,
youle lett your chamberlaine goe with mee,
three words that I may to him speake,
and soone he shall come againe to thee."80

when James Swynard came that Lady before,
shee let him see thorow the weme of her ring
how many there was of English lords
to wayte there for his Master and him.84

"but who beene yonder, my good Ladye,
that walkes soe royallye on yonder greene?"
"yonder is Lord Hunsden, Jamye," she saye;
"alas! heele doe you both tree and teene!"88

"and who beene yonder, thou gay Ladye,
that walkes soe royallye him beside?"
"yond is Sir William Drurye, Jamy," shee sayd,
"and a keene Captain hee is, and tryde."92

"how many miles is itt, thou good Ladye,
betwixt yond English Lord and mee?"
"marry thrise fifty mile, Jamy," shee sayd,
"and euen to seale and by the sea:96

"I neuer was on English ground,
nor neuer see itt with mine eye,
but as my witt and wisdomes serues,
and as [the] booke it telleth mee.100

"my mother, shee was a witch woman,
and part of itt shee learned mee;
shee wold let me see out of Lough Leuen
what they dyd in London cytye."104

"but who is yond, thou good Layde,
that comes yonder with an Osterne fface?"
"yonds Sir John fforster, Jamye," shee sayd;
"methinks thou sholdest better know him then I."108

"Euen soe I doe, my goodlye Ladye,
and euer alas, soe woe am I!"

he pulled his hatt ouer his eyes,
and, lord, he wept soe tenderlye!
he is gone to his Master againe,
and euen to tell him the veretye.

[Pg 292]

"Now hast thou beene with Marry, Jamy," he sayd,
"Euen as thy tounge will tell to mee;116
but if thou trust in any womans words,
thou must refraine good companye."

"It is noe words, my Lord," he sayes,
"yonder the men shee letts mee see,120
how many English Lords there is
is wayting there for you and mee;

"yonder I see the Lord Hunsden,
and hee and you is of the third degree;124
a greater enemye, indeed, my Lord,
in England none haue yee,"

"and I haue beene in Lough Leven
the most part of these yeeres three:128
yett had I neuer noe out-rake,
nor good games that I cold see;

"and I am thus bidden to yonder shooting
by William Douglas all trulye;132
therfore speake neuer a word out of thy mouth
That thou thinkes will hinder mee."

then he writhe the gold ring of his ffigar
and gaue itt to that Ladye gay;136
sayes, "that was a Legacye left vnto mee
in Harley woods where I cold bee."

"then ffarewell hart, and farewell hand,
and ffarwell all good companye!140
that woman shall neuer beare a sonne
shall know soe much of your privitye."

"now hold thy tounge, Ladye," hee sayde,
"and make not all this dole for mee,144
for I may well drinke, but Ist neuer eate,
till againe in Lough Leuen I bee."

he tooke his boate att the Lough Leuen
for to sayle now ouer the sea,148
and he hath cast vpp a siluer wand,
saies "fare thou well, my good Ladye!"
the Ladye looked ouer her left sholder;
in a dead swoone there fell shee.152
[Pg 293]

"goe backe againe, Douglas!" he sayd,
"and I will goe in thy companye.
for sudden sicknesse yonder Lady has tane,
and euer, alas, shee will but dye!156
"if ought come to yonder Ladye but good,
then blamed fore that I shall bee,
because a banished man I am,
and driuen out of my owne countrie."160
"come on, come on, my Lord," he sayes,
"and lett all such talking bee;
theres Ladyes enow in Lough Leuen,
and for to cheere yonder gay Ladye."164

"and you will not goe your selfe, my Lord,
you will lett my chamberlaine goe with me;
wee shall now take our boate againe,
and soone wee shall ouertake thee."168
"come on, come on, my Lord," he sayes,
"and lett now all this talking bee!
ffor my sister is craftye enoughe
for to beguile thousands such as you and mee."172

When they had sayled fifty myle,
now fifty mile vpon the sea,
hee had fforgotten a message that hee
shold doe in lough Leuen trulye:176
hee asked 'how ffar it was to that shooting,
that William Douglas promised me.'
"now faire words makes fooles faine;
and that may be seene by thy Master and thee,180
ffor you may happen think itt soone enoughe
when-euer you that shooting see."

Jamyne pulled his hatt now ouer his browe;
I wott the teares fell in his eye;184
and he is to his Master againe,

and ffor to tell him the veretye

he sayes, "fayre words makes fooles faine,
and that may be seene by you and mee,188
ffor wee may happen thinke itt soone enoughe
when-euer wee that shooting see."

[Pg 294]

"hold vpp thy head, Jamye," the Erle sayd,
"and neuer lett thy hart fayle thee;192
he did itt but to prove thee with,
and see how thow wold take with death trulye."

when they had sayled other fifty mile,
other fifty mile vpon the sea,196
Lord Peercy called to him, himselfe,
and sayd, "Douglas what wilt thou doe with mee?"

"looke that your brydle be wight, my Lord,
that you may goe as a shipp att sea;200
looke that your spurres be bright and sharpe,
that you may pricke her while sheele awaye."

"what needeth this, Douglas," he sayth.
"that thou needest to ffloute mee?204
for I was counted a horsseman good
before that euer I mett with thee.

"A ffalse Hector hath my horsse;
and euer an euill death may hee dye!208
and Willye Armestronge hath my spurres
and all the geere belongs to mee."

when thé had sayled other fifty mile,
other fifty mile vpon the sea,212
thé landed low by Barwicke side;
a deputed land Landed Lord Percye.

ffin[s]]

V.

MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS.



This excellent philosophical song appears to have been famous in the sixteenth century. It is quoted by Ben Jonson in his

play of *Every Man out of his Humour*, first acted in 1599, act i. sc. 1, where an impatient person says—

"I am no such pil'd cynique to believe
That beggery is the onely happinesse,
Or, with a number of these patient fooles,
To sing, 'My minde to me a kingdome is,'
When the lanke hungrie belly barks for foode."

[Pg 295]

It is here chiefly printed from a thin quarto Music book, intitled, "Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs of sadnes and pietie, made into Musicke of five parts: &c. By William Byrd, one of the Gent. of the Queenes Majesties honorable Chappell.—Printed by Thomas East, &c." 4to. no date: but Ames in his *Typog.* has mentioned another edit. of the same book, dated 1588, which I take to have been later than this.

Some improvements and an additional stanza (sc. the 5th), were had from two other ancient copies; one of them in black letter in the Pepys Collection, thus inscribed, "A sweet and pleasant sonet, intitled, 'My Minde to me a Kingdom is.' To the tune of, In Crete, &c."

Some of the stanzas in this poem were printed by Byrd separate from the rest: they are here given in what seemed the most natural order.

[The longest and apparently earliest version of this favourite poem is signed "E. Dier," in MS. Rawl. Poet. 85, fol. 17 in the Bodleian Library, and Dr. Hannah[\[972\]](#) attributes it to Sir Edward Dyer, the friend of Spenser and Sidney, whose little pieces were chiefly printed in *England's Helicon*. Sir Edward Dyer, of Sharpham Park, Somersetshire, was born about the year 1540. He was educated at Oxford, and afterwards was employed in several embassies. On the death of Sir John Wolley he was made Chancellor of the Order of the Garter, and at the same time knighted. He was an alchemist and dupe of Dr. Dee and Edward Kelly. Sir Egerton Brydges quotes from Aubrey the statement that he had four thousand pounds a year, and had four-score thousand pounds left to him, which he wasted almost all, but Sir Egerton considers the sums almost incredible for the time.

In "Posthumi or Sylvesters Remains, revived out of the ashes of that silver-tongued translatur and divine Poet Laureat," at the end of the translation of the *Divine Weekes* of Du Bartas, 1641, there is the following parody of this favourite poem:

"A Contented Minde.

"I waigh not Fortunes frowne or smile,
I joy not much in earthly joyes,
I seeke not state, I reake not stile,
I am not fond of fancies Toyes:
I rest so pleased with what I have,
I wish no more, no more I crave.

[Pg 296]

"I quake not at the Thunders crack,
I tremble not at noise of warre,
I swound not at the newes of wrack,
I shrink not at a Blazing Starre;
I feare not losse, I hope not gaine;

I envie none, I none disdaine.

"I see ambition never pleas'd,
I see some Tantals starv'd in store,
I see golds dropsie seldome eas'd,
I see even Midas gape for more:
I neither want, nor yet abound,
Enough's a feast, content is crown'd.

"I faine not friendship where I hate,
I fawne not on the great (in show)
I prize, I praise a meane estate,
Neither too lofty nor too low:
This, this is all my choice, my cheere,
A minde content, a conscience cleere."]



My minde to me a kingdome is;
Such perfect joy therein I finde
As farre exceeds all earthly blisse,
That God or Nature hath assignde:
Though much I want, that most would have,⁵
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

Content I live, this is my stay;
I seek no more than may suffice:
I presse to beare no haughtie sway;
Look what I lack my mind supplies.¹⁰
Loe! thus I triumph like a king,
Content with that my mind doth bring.

I see how plentie surfets oft,
And hastie clymbers soonest fall;
I see that such as sit aloft¹⁵
Mishap doth threaten most of all:
[Pg 297] These get with toile, and keep with feare:
Such cares my mind could never beare.

No princely pompe, nor welthie store,
No force to winne the victorie,²⁰
No wylie wit to salve a sore,
No shape to winne a lovers eye;
To none of these I yeeld as thrall,

For why my mind despiseth all.

Some have too much, yet still they crave,25

I little have, yet seek no more:

They are but poore, tho' much they have;

And I am rich with little store:

They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;

They lacke, I lend; they pine, I live.30

I laugh not at anothers losse,

I grudge not at anothers gaine;

No worldly wave my mind can tosse,

I brooke that is anothers bane:

I feare no foe, nor fawne on friend;35

I lothe not life, nor dread mine end.

I joy not in no earthly blisse;

I weigh not Ceresus' welth a straw;

For care, I care not what it is;

I feare not fortunes fatall law:40

My mind is such as may not move

For beautie bright or force of love.

I wish but what I have at will;

I wander not to seeke for more,

I like the plaine, I clime no hill;45

In greatest stormes I sitte on shore,

And laugh at them that toile in vaine

To get what must be lost againe.

[Pg 298]

I kisse not where I wish to kill;

I feigne not love where most I hate;50

I breake no sleep to winne my will;

I wayte not at the mighties gate;

I scorne no poore, I feare no rich;

I feele no want, nor have too much.

The court, ne cart, I like, ne loath;55

Extreames are counted worst of all:

The golden meane betwixt them both,

Doth surest sit, and fears no fall:

This is my choyce, for why I finde,

No wealth is like a quiet minde.60

My welth is health, and perfect ease;

My conscience clere my chiefe defence:

I never seeke by brybes to please,
Nor by desert to give offence:
Thus do I live, thus will I die;65
Would all did so as well as I!

VI. THE PATIENT COUNTESS.



The subject of this tale is taken from that entertaining Colloquy of *Erasmus*, intitled, "Uxor Μεμφίγαμος, sive Conjugium:" which has been agreeably modernized by the late Mr. *Spence*, in his little Miscellaneous Publication, intitled, "*Moralities*, &c. by Sir Harry Beaumont," 1753, 8vo. pag. 42.

The following stanzas are extracted from an ancient poem intitled *Albion's England*, written by *W. Warner*, a celebrated poet in the reign of Q. Elizabeth, though his name and works are now equally forgotten. The reader will find some account of him in vol. ii. book ii. song 24.

[Pg 299]

The following stanzas are printed from the author's improved edition of his work, printed in 1602, 4to.; the third impression of which appeared so early as 1592, in bl. let. 4to. The edition in 1602 is in thirteen books; and so it is reprinted in 1612, 4to.; yet, in 1606, was published "A Continuance of Albion's England, by the first author, W. W. Lond. 4to.:" this contains Books xiv. xv. xvi. There is also extant, under the name of Warner, "Syrinx, or a seven-fold Historie, pleasant, and profitable, comical, and tragical," 4to.

[The title of this poem challenges comparison with *Patient Griselda*, but it is in fact a totally different story, and as Mr. Hales says, "represents rather tact and management than patience in the wife of an unfaithful (not a tempting and essaying) husband." The first edition of Warner's poem was published in 1586, and the numerous impressions of it prove its popularity. The full title is as follows: "Albion's England, a continued History of the same Kingdome from the Originals of the first inhabitants thereof, unto the raigne of Queen Elizabeth."]



Impatience chaungeth smoke to flame, but jelousie is hell;
Some wives by patience have reduc'd ill husbands to live well:
As did the ladie of an earle, of whom I now shall tell.
An earle 'there was' had wedded, lov'd; was lov'd, and lived long
Full true to his fayre countesse; yet at last he did her wrong.5
Once hunted he untill the chace, long fasting, and the heat
Did house him in a peakish graunge[973] within a forest great.

Where knowne and welcom'd (as the place and persons might afforde)
 Browne bread, whig,[\[974\]](#) bacon, curds and milke were set him on the borde.
 A cushion made of lists, a stoole halfe backed with a hoope10
 [Pg 300] Were brought him, and he sitteth down besides a sorry coupe.[\[975\]](#)
 The poore old couple wisht their bread were wheat, their whig were perry,
 Their bacon beefe, their milke and curds were creame, to make him merry.
 Meane while (in russet neatly clad, with linen white as swanne,
 Herselfe more white, save rosie where the ruddy colour ranne:15
 Whome naked nature, not the aydes of arte made to excell)
 The good man's daughter sturres to see that all were feat[\[976\]](#) and well;
 The earle did marke her, and admire such beautie there to dwell.
 Yet fals he to their homely fare, and held him at a feast:
 But as his hunger slaked, so an amorous heat increast.
 When this repast was past, and thanks, and welcome too; he sayd21
 Unto his host and hostesse, in the hearing of the mayd:
 Yee know, quoth he, that I am lord of this, and many townes;
 I also know that you be poore, and I can spare you pownes.[\[977\]](#)
 Soe will I, so yee will consent, that yonder lasse and I25
 May bargaine for her love; at least, doe give me leave to trye.
 Who needs to know it? nay who dares into my doings pry?
 First they mislike, yet at the length for lucre were misled;
 And then the gamesome earle did wowe[\[978\]](#) the damsell for his bed.
 He took her in his armes, as yet so coyish to be kist,30
 [Pg 301] As mayds that know themselves belov'd, and yieldingly resist.
 In few, his offers were so large she lastly did consent;
 With whom he lodged all that night, and early home he went.
 He tooke occasion oftentimes in such a sort to hunt.
 Whom when his lady often mist, contrary to his wont,35
 And lastly was informed of his amorous haunt elsewhere;
 It greev'd her not a little, though she seem'd it well to beare.
 And thus she reasons with herselfe, some fault perhaps in me;
 Somewhat is done, that so he doth: alas! what may it be?
 How may I winne him to myself? he is a man, and men40
 Have imperfections; it behooves me pardon nature then.
 To checke him were to make him checke,[\[979\]](#) although hee now were chaste:
 A man controuled of his wife, to her makes lesser haste,
 If duty then, or daliance may prevayle to alter him;
 I will be dutifull, and make my selfe for daliance trim.45
 So was she, and so lovingly did entertaine her lord,
 As fairer, or more faultles none could be for bed or bord.
 Yet still he loves his leiman,[\[980\]](#) and did still pursue that game,
 Suspecting nothing less, than that his lady knew the same:
 Wherefore to make him know she knew, she this devise did frame:50

When long she had been wrong'd, and sought the foresayd meanes in vaine,
[Pg 302] She rideth to the simple graunge, but with a slender traine.
She lighteth, entreth, greets them well, and then did looke about her:
The guiltie houshold knowing her did wish themselves without her;
Yet, for she looked merily, the lesse they did misdoubt[\[981\]](#) her.⁵⁵
When she had seen the beauteous wench (then blushing fairnes fairer)
Such beauty made the countesse hold them both excus'd the rather.
Who would not bite at such a bait? thought she: and who (though loth)
So poore a wench, but gold might tempt? sweet errors lead them both.
Scarse one in twenty that had bragg'd of proffer'd gold denied,⁶⁰
Or of such yeelding beautie baulkt, but, tenne to one, had lied.
Thus thought she: and she thus declares her cause of coming thether;
My lord, oft hunting in these partes, through travel, night or wether,
Hath often lodged in your house; I thanke you for the same;
For why? it doth him jolly ease to lie so neare his game.⁶⁵
But, for you have not furniture beseeming such a guest,
I bring his owne, and come myselfe to see his lodging drest.
With that two sumpters were discharg'd, in which were hangings brave,
Silke coverings, curtens, carpets, plate, and al such turn should have.
[Pg 303] When all was handsomly dispos'd, she prayes them to have care⁷⁰
That nothing hap in their default,[\[982\]](#) that might his health impair:
And, Damsell, quoth shee, for it seemes this houshold is but three,
And for thy parents age, that this shall chiefly rest on thee;
Do me that good, else would to God he hither come no more.
So tooke she horse, and ere she went bestowed Gould good store.⁷⁵
Full little thought the countie[\[983\]](#) that his countesse had done so;
Who now return'd from far affaires did to his sweetheart go.
No sooner sat he foote within the late deformed cote,[\[984\]](#)
But that the formall change of things his wondring eies did note.
But when he knew those goods to be his proper goods; though late,⁸⁰
Scarse taking leave, he home returnes the matter to debate.
The countesse was a-bed, and he with her his lodging tooke;
Sir, welcome home (quoth shee); this night for you I did not looke.
Then did he question her of such his stuffe bestowed soe.
Forsooth, quoth she, because I did your love and lodging knowe;⁸⁵
Your love to be a proper wench, your lodging nothing lesse;
I held it for your health, the house more decently to dresse.
[Pg 304] Well wot I, notwithstanding her, your lordship loveth me;
And greater hope to hold you such by quiet, then brawles, 'you' see.
Then for my duty, your delight, and to retaine your favour,⁹⁰
All done I did, and patiently expect your wonted 'haviour.
Her patience, witte and answer wrought his gentle teares to fall:
When (kissing her a score of times) amend, sweet wife, I shall:

He said, and did it; 'so each wife her husband may' recall.

VII

DOWSABELL.



The following stanzas were written by *Michael Drayton*, a poet of some eminence in the reigns of Q. Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I.[\[985\]](#) They are inserted in one of his Pastorals, the first edition of which bears this whimsical title, "Idea. The Shepheards Garland fashioned in nine Eglogs. Rowlands sacrifice to the nine muses. Lond. 1593." 4to. They are inscribed with the author's name at length "To the noble and valerous gentleman master Robert Dudley, &c." It is very remarkable that when Drayton reprinted them in the first folio edit. of his works, 1619, he had given those Eclogues so thorough a revisal, that there is hardly a line to be found the same as in the old edition. This poem had received the fewest [\[Pg 305\]](#)corrections, and therefore is chiefly given from the ancient copy, where it is thus introduced by one of his Shepherds:

"Listen to mee, my lovely shepheards joye.
And thou shall heare, with mirth and mickle glee,
A pretie tale, which when I was a boy,
My toothles grandame oft hath tolde to me."

The author has professedly imitated the style and metre of some of the old metrical romances, particularly that of *Sir Isenbras*[\[986\]](#) (alluded to in v. 3), as the reader may judge from the following specimen:

"Lordynges, lysten, and you shal here, &c.

* * * * *

Ye shall well heare of a knight,
That was in warre full wyght,
And doughtye of his dede:
His name was Syr Isenbras,
Man nobler then he was
Lyved none with breade.
He was lyvely, large, and longe,
With shoulders broade, and armes stronge,
That myghtie was to se:
He was a hardye man, and hye,
All men hym loved that hym se,
For a gentyll knight was he:
Harpers loved him in hall,
With other minstrells all,
For he gave them golde and fee," &c.

This ancient legend was printed in black-letter, 4to. by Wylliam Copland; no date.[\[987\]](#) In the Cotton Library (Calig. A 2)

is a MS. copy of the same romance containing the greatest variations. They are probably two different translations of some French original.

[Pg 306]



Farre in the countrey of Arden,
There won'd[988] a knight, hight Cassemen,
As bolde as Isenbras:
Fell[989] was he, and eger bent,
In battell and in tournament,5
As was the good Sir Topas.

He had, as antique stories tell,
A daughter cleaped[990] Dowsabel,
A mayden fayre and free:
And for she was her fathers heire,10
Full well she was y-cond the leyre[991]
Of mickle curtesie.

The silke well couth she twist and twine,
And make the fine march-pine,[992]
And with the needle werke:15
And she couth helpe the priest to say
His mattins on a holy-day,
And sing a psalme in kirke.

She ware a frock of frolicke greene,
Might well beseeme a mayden queene,20
Which seemly was to see;
A hood to that so neat and fine,
In colour like the colombine,
Y-wrought full featously.[993]

Her features all as fresh above,25
As is the grasse that growes by Dove;
And lyth[994] as lasse of Kent.

Her skin as soft as Lemster wooll,[995]
[Pg 307] As white as snow on Peakish Hull,[996]
Or swanne that swims in Trent.30

This mayden in a morne betime
Went forth, when May was in her prime,
To get sweete cetywall,[997]

The honey-suckle, the harlocke,[\[998\]](#)

The lilly and the lady-smocke,35

To deck her summer hall.

Thus, as she wandred here and there,

Y-picking of the bloomed breere,

She chanced to espie

A shepheard sitting on a bancke,40

Like chanteclere he crowed crancke,[\[999\]](#)

And pip'd full merrilie.

He lear'd[\[1000\]](#) his sheepe as he him list,

When he would whistle in his fist,

To feede about him round;45

Whilst he full many a carroll sung,

Untill the fields and medowes rung,

And all the woods did sound.

In favour this same shepherds swayne

Was like the bedlam Tamburlayne,[\[1001\]](#)50

Which helde prowde kings in awe:

But meeke he was as lamb mought be;

[Pg 308] An innocent of ill as he[\[1002\]](#)

Whom his lewd brother slaw.

The shepheard ware a sheepe-gray cloke,55

Which was of the finest loke,[\[1003\]](#)

That could be cut with sheere:

His mittens were of bauzens[\[1004\]](#) skinne,

His cockers[\[1005\]](#) were of cordiwin,[\[1006\]](#)

His hood of meniveere.[\[1007\]](#)60

His aule and lingell[\[1008\]](#) in a thong,

His tar-boxe on his broad belt hong,

His breech of coyntrie[\[1009\]](#) blewe:

Full crispe and curled were his lockes,

His browes as white as Albion rocks:65

So like a lover true,

And pyping still he spent the day,

So merry as the poppingay;[\[1010\]](#)

Which liked Dowsabel:

That would she ought, or would she nought,70

This lad would never from her thought;

She in love-longing fell.

At length she tucked up her frocke,

White as a lilly was her smocke,
She drew the shepherd nye;⁷⁵
But then the shepherd pyp'd a good,
That all his sheepe forsooke their foode,
To heare his melodye.

[Pg 309]

Thy sheepe, quoth she, cannot be leane,
That have a jolly shepherds swayne,⁸⁰
The which can pipe so well:
Yea but, sayth he, their shepherd may,
If pyping thus he pine away
In love of Dowsabel.

Of love, fond boy, take thou no keepe,[\[1011\]](#)⁸⁵
Quoth she; looke thou unto thy sheepe,
Lest they should hap to stray.
Quoth he, so had I done full well,
Had I not seen fayre Dowsabell
Come forth to gather maye.⁹⁰

With that she gan to vaile her head,
Her cheeks were like the roses red,
But not a word she sayd:
With that the shepherd gan to frowne,
He threw his pretie pypes adowne,⁹⁵
And on the ground him layd.

Sayth she, I may not stay till night,
And leave my summer-hall undight,[\[1012\]](#)
And all for long of thee.
My coate,[\[1013\]](#) sayth he, nor yet my foulde¹⁰⁰
Shall neither sheepe nor shepherd hould,
Except thou favour mee.

Sayth she, Yet lever were I dead,
Then I should lose my mayden-head,
And all for love of men.¹⁰⁵

Sayth he, Yet are you too unkind.
If in your heart you cannot finde
To love us now and then.

[Pg 310]

And I to thee will be as kinde
As Colin was to Rosalinde,¹¹⁰
Of curtesie the flower.
Then will I be as true, quoth she,

As ever mayden yet might be

Unto her paramour.

With that she bent her snow-white knee,115

Downe by the shepheard kneeled shee,

And him she sweetely kist:

With that the shepheard whoop'd for joy,

Quoth he, ther's never shepheards boy

That ever was so blist.120

VIII.

THE FAREWELL TO LOVE.

From Beaumont and Fletcher's play, intituled *The Lover's Progress*. act iii. sc. 1.



Adieu, fond love, farewell you wanton powers;

I am free again.

Thou dull disease of bloud and idle hours,

Bewitching pain,

Fly to fools, that sigh away their time:5

My nobler love to heaven doth climb,

And there behold beauty still young,

That time can ne'er corrupt, nor death destroy,

Immortal sweetness by fair angels sung,

And honoured by eternity and joy:10

There lies my love, thither my hopes aspire,

Fond love declines, this heavenly love grows higher.

[Pg 311]

IX.

ULYSSES AND THE SYREN,



Affords a pretty poetical contest between Pleasure and Honour. It is found at the end of *Hymen's Triumph: a pastoral tragicomédie*, written by Daniel, and printed among his works, 4to. 1623.[\[1014\]](#) *Daniel*, who was a contemporary of Drayton's, and is said to have been poet laureat to Queen Elizabeth, was born in 1562, and died in 1619. *Anne*, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery (to whom Daniel had been tutor), has inserted a small portrait of him in a full-length

picture of herself, preserved at Appleby Castle, in Cumberland.

This little poem is the rather selected for a specimen of Daniel's poetic powers, as it is omitted in the later edition of his works, 2 vols. 12mo. 1718.

[Samuel Daniel was born in Somersetshire, and educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. He left college without a degree, "his geny being," according to Ant. à Wood, "more prone to easier and smoother subjects than in pecking and hewing at logic." He was tutor to Lady Anne Clifford, subsequently Countess of Pembroke, and afterwards groom of the privy chamber to Anne, queen of James I. Browne calls him in *Britannia's Pastorals*, "Wel-languaged Daniel," and the union of power of thought with sweetness and grace of expression exhibited by him is highly praised by Southey and Coleridge. He was free from indelicacy in his writings, and Fuller says of him that "he carried in his Christian and surname two holy prophets, his monitors, so to qualify his raptures that he abhorred all profaneness."]

[Pg 312]

Syren.



Come, worthy Greeke, Ulysses come,
Possesse these shores with me,
The windes and seas are troublesome,
And here we may be free.
Here may we sit and view their toyle,⁵
That travaile in the deepe,
Enjoy the day in mirth the while,
And spend the night in sleepe.

Ulysses.

Faire nymph, if fame or honour were
To be attain'd with ease,¹⁰
Then would I come and rest with thee.
And leave such toiles as these:
But here it dwels, and here must I
With danger seek it forth;
To spend the time luxuriously¹⁵
Becomes not men of worth.

Syren.

Ulysses, O be not deceiv'd
With that unreall name:
This honour is a thing conceiv'd,
And rests on others' fame.²⁰

Begotten only to molest
Our peace, and to beguile
(The best thing of our life) our rest,
And give us up to toyle!

[Pg 313]

Ulysses.

Delicious nymph, suppose there were²⁵
Nor honor, nor report,
Yet manlinesse would scorne to weare
The time in idle sport:
For toyle doth give a better touch
To make us feele our joy;³⁰
And ease findes tediousnes, as much
As labour yeelds annoy.

Syren.

Then pleasure likewise seemes the shore,
Whereto tendes all your toyle;
Which you forego to make it more,³⁵
And perish oft the while.
Who may disport them diversly,
Find never tedious day;
And ease may have variety,
As well as action may.⁴⁰

Ulysses.

But natures of the noblest frame
These toyles and dangers please;
And they take comfort in the same,
As much as you in ease:
And with the thought of actions past⁴⁵
Are recreated still:
When pleasure leaves a touch at last
To shew that it was ill.

Syren.

That doth opinion only cause,
That's out of custom bred;⁵⁰
Which makes us many other laws,
Than ever nature did.

[Pg 314] No widdowes waile for our delights,
Our sports are without blood;

The world we see by warlike wights55

Receives more hurt than good.

Ulysses.

But yet the state of things require

These motions of unrest,

And these great spirits of high desire

Seem borne to turne them best:60

To purge the mischiefes, that increase

And all good order mar:

For oft we see a wicked peace,

To be well chang'd for war.

Syren.

Well, well, Ulysses, then I see65

I shall not have thee here;

And therefore I will come to thee,

And take my fortune there.

I must be wonne that cannot win,

Yet lost were I not wonne:70

For beauty hath created bin

T' undoo or be undone.

X.

CUPID'S PASTIME.



This beautiful poem, which possesses a classical elegance hardly to be expected in the age of James I. is printed from the 4th edition of Davison's Poems,[\[1015\]](#) &c. 1621. It is also found in a later miscellany, intituled, "Le Prince d'Amour," 1660, 8vo. Francis Davison, editor of the poems [Pg 315]above referred to, was son of that unfortunate secretary of state who suffered so much from the affair of Mary Q. of Scots. These poems, he tells us in his preface, were written by himself, by his brother [Walter], who was a soldier in the wars of the Low Countries, and by some dear friends "anonymoi." Among them are found some pieces by Sir J. Davis, the Countess of Pembroke, Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, and other wits of those times.

In the fourth vol. of *Dryden's Miscellanies*, this poem is attributed to Sydney Godolphin, Esq.; but erroneously, being probably written before he was born. One edit. of Davison's book was published in 1608. Godolphin was born in 1610, and died in 1642-3. Ath. Ox. ii. 23.





It chanc'd of late a shepherd swain,
That went to seek his straying sheep,
Within a thicket on a plain
Espied a dainty nymph asleep.

Her golden hair o'erspred her face;5
Her careless arms abroad were cast;
Her quiver had her pillows place;
Her breast lay bare to every blast.

The shepherd stood and gaz'd his fill;
Nought durst he do; nought durst he say;10
Whilst chance, or else perhaps his will,
Did guide the god of love that way.

The crafty boy that sees her sleep,
Whom if she wak'd he durst not see;
Behind her closely seeks to creep,15
Before her nap should ended bee.

There come, he steals her shafts away,
And puts his own into their place;
Nor dares he any longer stay,
But, ere she wakes, hies thence apace.20

[Pg 316]

Scarce was he gone, but she awakes,
And spies the shepherd standing by:
Her bended bow in haste she takes,
And at the simple swain lets flye.

Forth flew the shaft, and pierc'd his heart,25
That to the ground he fell with pain:
Yet up again forthwith he start,
And to the nymph he ran amain.

Amazed to see so strange a sight,
She shot, and shot, but all in vain;30
The more his wounds, the more his might
Love yielded strength amidst his pain.

Her angry eyes were great with tears,
She blames her hand, she blames her skill;
The bluntness of her shafts she fears,35
And try them on herself she will.

Take heed, sweet nymph, trye not thy shaft,

Each little touch will pierce thy heart:

Alas! thou know'st not Cupids craft;

Revenge is joy; the end is smart.40

Yet try she will, and pierce some bare;

Her hands were glov'd, but next to hand

Was that fair breast, that breast so rare,

That made the shepherd senseless stand.

That breast she pierc'd; and through that breast45

Love found an entry to her heart;

At feeling of this new-come guest,

Lord! how this gentle nymph did start?

She runs not now; she shoots no more;

Away she throws both shaft and bow:50

She seeks for what she shunn'd before,

She thinks the shepherds haste too slow.

[Pg 317]

Though mountains meet not, lovers may:

What other lovers do, did they:

The god of love sate on a tree,55

And laught that pleasant sight to see.

XI.

THE CHARACTER OF A HAPPY LIFE.



This little moral poem was writ by Sir *Henry Wotton*, who died Provost of Eton in 1639. Æt. 72. It is printed from a little collection of his pieces, intituled. *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, 1651, 12mo.; compared with one or two other copies. [Ben Jonson is said to have greatly admired these verses, and to have known them by heart.]



How happy is he born or taught,

That serveth not anothers will;

Whose armour is his honest thought,

And simple truth his highest skill:

Whose passions not his masters are;5

Whose soul is still prepar'd for death;
Not ty'd unto the world with care
Of princes ear, or vulgar breath:

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat:10
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruine make oppressors great:

Who envies none, whom chance doth raise,
Or vice: Who never understood
How deepest wounds are given with praise;15
Nor rules of state, but rules of good:
[Pg 318]

Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than gifts to lend;
And entertaines the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friend.20

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or feare to fall;
Lord of himselfe, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all.

XII.

GILDEROY



Was a famous robber, who lived about the middle of the last century, if we may credit the histories and storybooks of highwaymen, which relate many improbable feats of him, as his robbing Cardinal Richelieu, Oliver Cromwell, &c. But these stories have probably no other authority than the records of Grub-street. At least the *Gilderoy*, who is the hero of Scottish songsters, seems to have lived in an earlier age; for, in Thompson's *Orpheus Caledonius*, vol. ii. 1733, 8vo. is a copy of this ballad, which, tho' corrupt and interpolated, contains some lines that appear to be of genuine antiquity: in these he is represented as contemporary with Mary Q. of Scots: *ex. gr.*

"The Queen of Scots possessed nought,
That my love let me want:
For cow and ew he to me brought,
And een whan they were scant.
All these did honestly possess
He never did annoy,
Who never fail'd to pay their cess

To my love Gilderoy."

These lines perhaps might safely have been inserted among the following stanzas, which are given from a written copy, that appears to have received some modern corrections. Indeed, the common popular ballad contained some indecent luxuriations that required the pruning-hook.

[Pg 319]

[The subject of this ballad was a ruffian totally unworthy of the poetic honours given to him, and the poem itself can in no way be looked upon as historic. To mention but one instance of its departure from truth—the song is said to have been written by a young woman of a superior station in society who had been induced to live with the freebooter, but the fact was that one thousand marks having been offered for his apprehension, he was betrayed by his mistress Peg Cunningham, and captured after killing eight of the men sent against him, and stabbing the woman.

He was one of the proscribed clan Gregor, and a notorious lifter of cattle in the Highlands of Perthshire for some time before 1636. In February of that year seven of his accomplices were taken, tried, condemned, and executed at Edinburgh. These men were apprehended chiefly through the exertions of the Stewarts of Athol, and in revenge Gilderoy burned several of the houses belonging to the Stewarts. In a few months, however, he was captured, as before mentioned, and in July, 1636, was hanged with five accomplices at the Gallowlee, between Leith and Edinburgh. As a mark of unenviable distinction, Gilderoy was hanged on a gallows higher than the rest. It is curious that this wretched miscreant, who robbed the poor and outraged all women who came in his way, should have become popular in the south of Britain. His adventures, with the various details noticed above by Percy, are related in Captain Alexander Smith's *History of Highwaymen*, &c., 1719, and in Johnson's *Lives and Exploits of Highwaymen*, 1734.

The earliest known version of this song was printed in London in 1650, and another is included in *Westminster Drollery*, 1671. The latter consists of five stanzas, the first being:

"Was ever grief so great as mine
Then speak dear bearn, I prethee,
That thus must leave my Gilderoy,
O my benison gang with thee.
Good speed be with you then Sir she said
For gone is all my joy:
And gone is he whom I love best,
My handsome Gilderoy."

The second stanza is Percy's fifth, with some of the "luxuriations" he refers to. The third stanza is a variation of Percy's first.

"Now Gilderoy was bonny boy
Would needs to th' King be gone
With his silken garters on his legs,
And the roses on his shoone.

[Pg 320] But better he had staid at home

With me his only joy,
For on a gallow tree they hung
My handsome Gilderoy."

The fourth stanza is a variety of Percy's eleventh, and the fifth of his ninth.

There is another version of this song in the *Collection of Old Ballads*, 1723 (vol. i.), entitled "The Scotch Lover's Lamentation, or Gilderoy's last farewell," which contains some few "luxuriances," but is on the whole superior to the "improved" one here printed. This was altered by Lady Wardlaw, who added the stanzas between brackets, besides the one quoted above by Percy.

Gilderoy is now, perhaps, better known by Campbell's song than by this ballad. The name is a corruption of the Gaelic *gille roy*, red-haired boy.]



Gilderoy was a bonnie boy,
Had roses tull[[1016](#)] his shoone,
His stockings were of silken soy,[[1017](#)]
Wi' garters hanging doune:
It was, I weene, a comelie sight,5
To see sae trim a boy;
He was my jo[[1018](#)] and hearts delight,
My handsome Gilderoy.

Oh! sike twa charming een he had,
A breath as sweet as rose,10
He never ware a Highland plaid,
But costly silken clothes;
He gain'd the luve of ladies gay,
Nane eir tull him was coy:
Ah! wae is mee! I mourn the day15
For my dear Gilderoy.

[Pg 321]

My Gilderoy and I were born,
Baith in one toun together,
We scant were seven years beforne,
We gan to luve each other;20
Our dadies and our mammies thay,
Were fill'd wi' mickle joy,
To think upon the bridal day,
Twixt me and Gilderoy.

For Gilderoy that luve of mine,25
Gude faith, I freely bought
A wedding sark[[1019](#)] of holland fine,
Wi' silken flowers wrought:

And he gied me a wedding ring,
Which I receiv'd wi' joy,30
Nae lad nor lassie eir could sing,
Like me and Gilderoy.

Wi' mickle joy we spent our prime,
Till we were baith sixteen,
And aft we past the langsome time,35
Among the leaves sae green;
Aft on the banks we'd sit us thair,
And sweetly kiss and toy,
Wi' garlands gay wad deck my hair
My handsome Gilderoy.40

[Oh! that he still had been content,
Wi' me to lead his life;
But, ah! his manfu' heart was bent,
To stir in feates of strife:
And he in many a venturous deed,45
His courage bauld wad try;
And now this gars[\[1020\]](#) mine heart to bleed,
For my dear Gilderoy.
[Pg 322]

And when of me his leave he tuik,
The tears they wat mine ee,50
I gave tull him a parting luik,
"My benison gang wi' thee;
God speed thee weil, mine ain dear heart,
For gane is all my joy;
My heart is rent sith we maun part,55
My handsome Gilderoy."]

My Gilderoy baith far and near,
Was fear'd in every toun,
And bauldly bare away the gear,[\[1021\]](#)
Of many a lawland loun:60
Nane eir durst meet him man to man,
He was sae brave a boy;
At length wi' numbers he was tane,
My winsome[\[1022\]](#) Gilderoy.

Wae worth[\[1023\]](#) the loun that made the laws,65
To hang a man for gear,
To 'reave of life for ox or ass,
For sheep, or horse, or mare:

Had not their laws been made sae strick,
I neir had lost my joy,70
Wi' sorrow neir had wat my cheek,
For my dear Gilderoy.
Giff Gilderoy had done amisse,
He mought hae banisht been;
Ah! what fair cruelty is this,75
To hang sike handsome men:
To hang the flower o' Scottish land,
Sae sweet and fair a boy;
Nae lady had sae white a hand,
As thee, my Gilderoy.80

[Pg 323]

Of Gilderoy sae fraid they were,
They bound him mickle strong,
Tull Edenburrow they led him thair,
And on a gallows hung:
They hung him high aboon the rest,85
He was sae trim a boy;
Thair dyed the youth whom I lued best,
My handsome Gilderoy.
Thus having yielded up his breath,
I bare his corpse away,90
Wi' tears, that trickled for his death,
I washt his comelye clay;
And siker[\[1024\]](#) in a grave sae deep,
I laid the dear-lued boy,
And now for evir maun I weep,95
My winsome Gilderoy.

✱

XIII.

WINIFREDA.



This beautiful address to conjugal love, a subject too much neglected by the libertine Muses, was, I believe, first printed in a volume of *Miscellaneous Poems, by several hands*, published by D. [David] Lewis, 1726, 8vo.

It is there said, how truly I know not, to be "a translation from the ancient British language."



Away; let nought to love displeasing,
My Winifreda, move your care;
Let nought delay the heavenly blessing,
Nor squeamish pride, nor gloomy fear.

What tho' no grants of royal donors⁵
With pompous titles grace our blood;
We'll shine in more substantial honors,
And to be noble we'll be good.

Our name, while virtue thus we tender,
Will sweetly sound where-e'er 'tis spoke:¹⁰
And all the great ones, they shall wonder
How they respect such little folk.

What though from fortune's lavish bounty
No mighty treasures we possess;
We'll find within our pittance plenty,¹⁵
And be content without excess.

Still shall each returning season
Sufficient for our wishes give;
For we will live a life of reason,
And that's the only life to live.²⁰

Through youth and age in love excelling,
We'll hand in hand together tread;
Sweet-smiling peace shall crown our dwelling,
And babes, sweet-smiling babes, our bed.

How should I love the pretty creatures,²⁵
While round my knees they fondly clung;
To see them look their mothers features,
To hear them lisp their mothers tongue.

And when with envy time transported,
Shall think to rob us of our joys,³⁰
You'll in your girls again be courted,
And I'll go a wooing in my boys.

THE WITCH OF WOKEY



Was published in a small collection of poems, intituled *Euthemia, or the Power of Harmony*, &c. 1756, written in 1748, by the ingenious Dr. *Harrington*, of Bath, who never allowed them to be published, and withheld his name till it could no longer be concealed. The following copy was furnished by the late Mr. *Shenstone*, with some variations and corrections of his own, which he had taken the liberty to propose, and for which the author's indulgence was intreated. In this edition it was intended to reprint the author's own original copy; but, as that may be seen correctly given in *Pearch's* Collection, vol. i. 1783, p. 161, it was thought the reader of taste would wish to have the variations preserved, they are, therefore, still retained here, which it is hoped the worthy author will excuse with his wonted liberality.

Wokey-hole is a noted cavern in Somersetshire, which has given birth to as many wild fanciful stories as the Sybils Cave, in Italy. Thro' a very narrow entrance, it opens into a very large vault, the roof whereof, either on account of its height, or the thickness of the gloom, cannot be discovered by the light of torches. It goes winding a great way underground, is crossed by a stream of very cold water, and is all horrid with broken pieces of rock: many of these are evident petrifications; which, on account of their singular forms, have given rise to the fables alluded to in this poem.

[Pg 326]



In aunciente days tradition showes

A base and wicked elfe arose,

The Witch of Wokey hight:

Oft have I heard the fearfull tale

From Sue, and Roger of the vale,⁵

On some long winter's night.

Deep in the dreary dismall cell,

Which seem'd and was ycleped hell,

This blear-eyed hag did hide:

Nine wicked elves, as legends sayne,¹⁰

She chose to form her guardian trayne,

And kennel near her side.

Here screeching owls oft made their nest,

While wolves its craggy sides possest,

Night-howling thro' the rock:¹⁵

No wholesome herb could here be found;

She blasted every plant around,
And blister'd every flock.

Her haggard face was foul to see;
Her mouth unmeet a mouth to bee;20
Her eyne of deadly leer,
She nought devis'd, but neighbour's ill;
She wreak'd on all her wayward will,
And marr'd all goodly chear.

All in her prime, have poets sung,25
No gaudy youth, gallant and young,
E'er blest her longing armes;
And hence arose her spight to vex,
And blast the youth of either sex,
By dint of hellish charms.30

[Pg 327]

From Glaston came a lerned wight,
Full bent to marr her fell despight,
And well he did, I ween:
Sich mischief never had been known,
And, since his mickle lerninge shown,35
Sich mischief ne'er has been.

He chauntede out his godlie booke,
He crost the water, blest the brooke,
Then—pater noster done,—
The ghastly hag he sprinkled o'er;40
When lo! where stood a hag before,
Now stood a ghastly stone.

Full well 'tis known adown the dale:
Tho' passing strange indeed the tale,
And doubtfull may appear,45
I'm bold to say, there's never a one,
That has not seen the witch in stone,
With all her household gear.

But tho' this lernede clerke did well;
With grieved heart, alas! I tell,50
She left this curse behind:
That Wokey-nymphs forsaken quite,
Tho' sense and beauty both unite,
Should find no leman kind.

For lo! even, as the fiend did say,55

The sex have found it to this day,
That men are wondrous scant:
Here's beauty, wit, and sense combin'd,
With all that's good and virtuous join'd,
Yet hardly one gallant.60

Shall then sich maids unpitied moane?
They might as well, like her, be stone,
As thus forsaken dwell.

[Pg 328] Since Glaston now can boast no clerks;
Come down from Oxenford, ye sparks,65
And, oh! revoke the spell.

Yet stay—nor thus despond, ye fair;
Virtue's the gods' peculiar care;
I hear the gracious voice:
Your sex shall soon be blest agen,70
We only wait to find sich men,
As best deserve your choice.

XV.

BRYAN AND PEREENE,

A West Indian Ballad,



Is founded on a real fact, that happened in the island of St. Christophers about the beginning of the present reign. The Editor owes the following stanzas to the friendship of Dr. *James Grainger*[\[1025\]](#) who was an eminent physician in that island when this tragical incident happened, and died there much honoured and lamented in 1767. To this ingenious gentleman the public are indebted for the fine *Ode on Solitude*, printed in the fourth vol. of Dodsley's *Miscel.* p. 229, in which are assembled some of the sublimest images in nature. The reader will pardon the insertion of the first stanza here, for the sake of rectifying the two last lines, which were thus given by the author:

"O Solitude, romantic maid,
Whether by nodding towers you tread,
Or haunt the desart's trackless gloom,
Or hover o'er the yawning tomb,
Or climb the Andes' clifted side,
Or by the Nile's coy source abide,
Or starting from your half-year's sleep
[Pg 329] From Hecla view the thawing deep,
Or at the purple dawn of day

Tadmor's marble wastes survey," &c.

alluding to the account of Palmyra published by some late ingenious travellers, and the manner in which they were struck at the first sight of those magnificent ruins by break of day.[\[1026\]](#)



The north-east wind did briskly blow,
The ship was safely moor'd;
Young Bryan thought the boat's-crew slow,
And so leapt over-board.

Pereene, the pride of Indian dames,⁵
His heart long held in thrall;
And whoso his impatience blames,
I wot, ne'er lov'd at all.

A long long year, one month and day,
He dwelt on English land,¹⁰
Nor once in thought or deed would stray,
Tho' ladies sought his hand.

For Bryan he was tall and strong,
Right blythsome roll'd his een,
Sweet was his voice whene'er he sung,¹⁵
He scant had twenty seen.

But who the countless charms can draw,
That grac'd his mistress true;
Such charms the old world seldom saw,
Nor oft I ween the new.²⁰

[Pg 330]

Her raven hair plays round her neck,
Like tendrils of the vine;
Her cheeks red dewy rose-buds deck,
Her eyes like diamonds shine.

Soon as his well-known ship she spied,²⁵
She cast her weeds away,
And to the palmy shore she hied,
All in her best array.

In sea-green silk so neatly clad,
She there impatient stood;³⁰
The crew with wonder saw the lad

Repell the foaming flood.

Her hands a handkerchief display'd.

Which he at parting gave;

Well pleas'd the token he survey'd,35

And manlier beat the wave.

Her fair companions one and all,

Rejoicing crowd the strand;

For now her lover swam in call,

And almost touch'd the land.40

Then through the white surf did she haste,

To clasp her lovely swain;

When, ah! a shark bit through his waste:

His heart's blood dy'd the main!

He shriek'd! his half sprang from the wave,45

Streaming with purple gore,

And soon it found a living grave,

And ah! was seen no more.

Now haste, now haste, ye maids, I pray,

Fetch water from the spring:50

She falls, she swoons, she dies away,

And soon her knell they ring.

[Pg 331]

Now each May morning round her tomb

Ye fair, fresh flowerets strew,

So may your lovers scape his doom,55

Her hapless fate scape you.

XVI.

GENTLE RIVER, GENTLE RIVER,

Translated from the Spanish.



Although the English are remarkable for the number and variety of their ancient ballads, and retain perhaps a greater fondness for these old simple rhapsodies of their ancestors, than most other nations; they are not the only people who have distinguished themselves by compositions of this kind. The Spaniards have great multitudes of them, many of which are of the highest merit. They call them in their language *Romances*, and have collected them into volumes under the titles of *El Romancero*, *El Cancionero*,[\[1027\]](#) &c. Most of them relate to their conflicts with the Moors, and display a spirit of

gallantry peculiar to that romantic people. But of all the Spanish ballads none exceed in poetical merit those inserted in a little Spanish *History of the civil wars of Granada*, describing the dissensions which raged in that last seat of Moorish empire before it was conquered in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1491. In this history (or perhaps romance) a great number of heroic songs are inserted and appealed to as authentic vouchers for the truth of facts. In reality the prose narrative seems to be drawn up for no other end, but to introduce and illustrate those beautiful pieces.

The Spanish editor pretends (how truly I know not) that they are translations from the Arabic or Morisco language. Indeed, from the plain unadorned nature of the verse, and the native simplicity of the language and sentiment, which runs through these poems, one would judge them to have been composed soon after the conquest of Granada[\[1028\]](#) above mentioned; as the prose narrative [Pg 332]in which they are inserted was published about a century after. It should seem, at least, that they were written before the Castellians had formed themselves so generally, as they have done since, on the model of the Tuscan poets, or had imported from Italy that fondness for conceit and refinement, which has for near two centuries past so much infected the Spanish poetry, and rendered it so frequently affected and obscure.

As a specimen of the ancient Spanish manner, which very much resembles that of our English bards and minstrels, the reader is desired candidly to accept the two following poems. They are given from a small collection of pieces of this kind, which the Editor some years ago translated for his amusement when he was studying the Spanish language. As the first is a pretty close translation, to gratify the curious it is accompanied with the original. The metre is the same in all these old Spanish ballads: it is of the most simple construction, and is still used by the common people in their extemporaneous songs, as we learn from *Baretti's Travels*. It runs in short stanzas of four lines, of which the second and fourth alone correspond in their terminations; and in these it is only required that the vowels should be alike, the consonants may be altogether different, as

pone	casa	meten	arcos
noble	cañas	muere	gamo

Yet has this kind of verse a sort of simple harmonious flow, which atones for the imperfect nature of the rhyme, and renders it not displeasing to the ear. The same flow of numbers has been studied in the following versions. The first of them is given from two different originals, both of which are printed in the *Hist. de las civiles guerras de Granada*, Mad. 1694. One of them hath the rhymes ending in *aa*, the other in *ia*. It is the former of these that is here reprinted. They both of them begin with the same line:

"Rio verde, rio verde,"[\[1029\]](#)

which could not be translated faithfully:

"Verdant river, verdant river,"

would have given an affected stiffness to the verse; the great merit [Pg 333]of which is easy simplicity; and therefore a more simple epithet was adopted, though less poetical or expressive.

[The two following Spanish ballads are peculiarly out of place in a collection of English ballads, and they are not very good specimens of the class from which they are taken. Those who wish for information on Spanish ballads must refer to Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*; T. Rodd's *Ancient Spanish Ballads, relating to the Twelve Peers of France mentioned in Don Quixote*, 2 vols. London, 1821; and J. G. Lockhart's *Ancient Spanish Ballads, historical and romantic*, 1823.]





[Pg 334]



Rio verde, rio verde,
Quanto cuerpo en ti se baña
De Christianos y de Moros
Muertos por la dura espada!
Y tus ondas cristalinas⁵
De roxa sangre se esmaltan:
Entre Moros y Christianos
Muy gran batalla se trava.
Murieron Duques y Condes,
Grandes señores de salva:¹⁰
Murio gente de valia
De la nobleza de España.
En ti murio don Alonso,
Que de Aguilar se llamaba;
El valeroso Urdiales,¹⁵
Con don Alonso acababa.
Por un ladera arriba
El buen Sayavedra marcha;
Naturel es de Sevilla,
De la gente mas granada.²⁰
Tras el iba un Renegado,
Desta manera le habla;
Date, date, Sayavedra,
No huyas de la Batalla.
Yo te conozco muy bien,²⁵
Gran tiempo estuve en tu casa;
Y en la Plaça de Sevilla
Bien te vide jugar cañas.

[Pg 335]





Gentle river, gentle river,
Lo, thy streams are stain'd with gore,
Many a brave and noble captain
Floats along thy willow'd shore.

All beside thy limpid waters,⁵
All beside thy sands so bright,
Moorish Chiefs and Christian Warriors
Join'd in fierce and mortal fight.

Lords, and dukes, and noble princes
On thy fatal banks were slain:¹⁰
Fatal banks that gave to slaughter
All the pride and flower of Spain.

There the hero, brave Alonzo
Full of wounds and glory died:
There the fearless Urdiales¹⁵
Fell a victim by his side.

Lo! where yonder Don Saavedra
Thro' their squadrons slow retires;
Proud Seville, his native city,
Proud Seville his worth admires.²⁰

Close behind a renegado
Loudly shouts with taunting cry;
Yield thee, yield thee, Don Saavedra,
Dost thou from the battle fly?

Well I know thee, haughty Christian,²⁵
Long I liv'd beneath thy roof;
Oft I've in the lists of glory
Seen thee win the prize of proof.

[Pg 336]

Conozco a tu padre y madre,
Y a tu muger doña Clara;³⁰
Siete anos fui tu cautivo,
Malamente me tratabas.

Y aora lo seras mio,
Si Mahoma me ayudara;
Y tambien te tratare,³⁵
Como a mi me tratabas.

Sayavedra que lo oyera,
Al Moro bolvio la cara;
Tirole el Moro una flecha,
Pero nunca le acertaba.40

Hiriole Sayavedra
De una herida muy mala:
Muerto cayo el Renegado
Sin poder hablar palabra.

Sayavedra fue cercado45
De mucha Mora canalla,
Y al cabo cayo alli muerto
De una muy mala lançada.

Don Alonso en este tiempo
Bravamente peleava,50
Y el cavallo le avian muerto,
Y le tiene por muralla.

Mas cargaron tantos Moros
Que mal le hieren y tratan:
De la sangre, que perdia,55
Don Alonso se desmaya.

Al fin, al fin cayo muerto
Al pie de un pena alta.—
----Muerto queda don Alonso,
Eterna fama ganara.60

[Pg 337]

Well I know thy aged parents,
Well thy blooming bride I know;30
Seven years I was thy captive,
Seven years of pain and woe.

May our prophet grant my wishes,
Haughty chief, thou shalt be mine:
Thou shalt drink that cup of sorrow,35
Which I drank when I was thine.

Like a lion turns the warrior,
Back he sends an angry glare:
Whizzing came the Moorish javelin,
Vainly whizzing thro' the air.40

Back the hero full of fury
Sent a deep and mortal wound:

Instant sunk the Renegado,
 Mute and lifeless on the ground.
 With a thousand Moors surrounded,45
 Brave Saavedra stands at bay:
 Wearied out but never daunted,
 Cold at length the warrior lay.
 Near him fighting great Alonzo
 Stout resists the Paynim bands;50
 From his slaughter'd steed dismounted
 Firm intrench'd behind him stands.
 Furious press the hostile squadron,
 Furious he repels their rage:
 Loss of blood at length enfeebles:55
 Who can war with thousands wage!
 Where yon rock the plain o'ershadows
 Close beneath its foot retir'd,
 Fainting sunk the bleeding hero,
 And without a groan expir'd.60

* * * * *

[Pg 338]

✱ In the Spanish original of the foregoing ballad follow a few more stanzas, but being of inferior merit were not translated.

Renegado properly signifies an Apostate; but it is sometimes used to express an Infidel in general; as it seems to do above in ver. 21, &c.

The image of the *Lion*, &c. in ver. 37, is taken from the other Spanish copy, the rhymes of which end in *ia*, viz.

"Sayavedra, que lo oyera,
 "Como un leon rebolbia."

XVII.

ALCANZOR AND ZAYDA,

A MOORISH TALE,
 Imitated from the Spanish.



The foregoing version was rendered as literal as the nature of the two languages would admit. In the following a wider

compass hath been taken. The Spanish poem that was chiefly had in view is preserved in the same history of the *Civil Wars of Granada*, f. 22, and begins with these lines:

"Por la calle de su dama

"Passeando se anda," &c.



Softly blow the evening breezes,

Softly fall the dews of night;

Yonder walks the Moor Alcanzor,

Shunning every glare of light.

In yon palace lives fair Zaida,⁵

Whom he loves with flame so pure:

[Pg 339] Loveliest she of Moorish ladies;

He a young and noble Moor.

Waiting for the appointed minute,

Oft he paces to and fro;¹⁰

Stopping now, now moving forwards,

Sometimes quick, and sometimes slow.

Hope and fear alternate teize him,

Oft he sighs with heart-felt care.——

See, fond youth, to yonder window¹⁵

Softly steps the timorous fair.

Lovely seems the moon's fair lustre

To the lost benighted swain,

When all silvery bright she rises,

Gilding mountain, grove, and plain.²⁰

Lovely seems the sun's full glory

To the fainting seaman's eyes,

When some horrid storm dispersing

O'er the wave his radiance flies.

But a thousand times more lovely²⁵

To her longing lover's sight

Steals half-seen the beauteous maiden

Thro' the glimmerings of the night.

Tip-toe stands the anxious lover,

Whispering forth a gentle sigh:³⁰

Alla[[1030](#)] keep thee, lovely lady;

Tell me, am I doom'd to die?

Is it true the dreadful story,
Which thy damsel tells my page,
That seduc'd by sordid riches³⁵
Thou wilt sell thy bloom to age?
[Pg 340]

An old lord from Antiquera
Thy stern father brings along;
But canst thou, inconstant Zaida,
Thus consent my love to wrong?⁴⁰

If 'tis true now plainly tell me,
Nor thus trifle with my woes;
Hide not then from me the secret,
Which the world so clearly knows.

Deeply sigh'd the conscious maiden,⁴⁵
While the pearly tears descend:
Ah! my lord, too true the story;
Here our tender loves must end.

Our fond friendship is discover'd,
Well are known our mutual vows:⁵⁰
All my friends are full of fury;
Storms of passion shake the house.

Threats, reproaches, fears surround me;
My stern father breaks my heart:
Alla knows how dear it costs me,⁵⁵
Generous youth, from thee to part.

Ancient wounds of hostile fury
Long have rent our house and thine;
Why then did thy shining merit
Win this tender heart of mine?⁶⁰

Well thou know'st how dear I lov'd thee
Spite of all their hateful pride,
Tho' I fear'd my haughty father
Ne'er would let me be thy bride.

Well thou know'st what cruel chidings⁶⁵
Oft I've from my mother borne;
[Pg 341] What I've suffered here to meet thee
Still at eve and early morn.

I no longer may resist them;

All, to force my hand combine;70
And to-morrow to thy rival
This weak frame I must resign.
Yet think not thy faithful Zaida
Can survive so great a wrong;
Well my breaking heart assures me75
That my woes will not be long.

Farewell then, my dear Alcanzor!
Farewell too my life with thee!
Take this scarf a parting token;
When thou wear'st it think on me.80

Soon, lov'd youth, some worthier maiden
Shall reward thy generous truth;
Sometimes tell her how thy Zaida
Died for thee in prime of youth.

—To him all amaz'd, confounded,85
Thus she did her woes impart:
Deep he sigh'd, then cry'd,—O Zaida!
Do not, do not break my heart.

Canst thou think I thus will lose thee?
Canst thou hold my love so small?90
No! a thousand times I'll perish!——
My curst rival too shall fall.

Canst thou, wilt thou yield thus to them?
O break forth, and fly to me!
This fond heart shall bleed to save thee,95
These fond arms shall shelter thee.

[Pg 342]

'Tis in vain, in vain, Alcanzor,
Spies surround me, bars secure:
Scarce I steal this last dear moment,
While my damsel keeps the door.100

Hark, I hear my father storming!
Hark, I hear my mother chide!
I must go: farewell for ever!
Gracious Alla be thy guide!

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

[Pg 343]





APPENDIX I.

AN ESSAY ON THE ANCIENT MINSTRELS IN ENGLAND.



[Pg 344]

[Pg 345]



APPENDIX I.

AN ESSAY ON THE ANCIENT MINSTRELS IN ENGLAND.

I.



The Minstrels[\[A\]](#)[\[1031\]](#) were an order of men in the middle ages, who subsisted by the arts of poetry and music, and sang to the harp verses composed by themselves, or others.[\[1032\]](#) They also appear to have accompanied their songs with mimicry and action; and to have practised such various means of diverting as were much admired in those rude times, and [\[Pg 346\]](#)supplied the want of more refined entertainment.[\[B\]](#) These arts rendered them extremely popular and acceptable in this and all the neighbouring countries; where no high scene of festivity was esteemed complete, that was not set off with the exercise of their talents; and where, so long as the spirit of chivalry subsisted, they were protected and caressed, because their songs tended to do honour to the ruling passion of the times, and to encourage and foment a martial spirit.

The Minstrels seem to have been the genuine successors of the ancient Bards,[\[C\]](#) who under different names were admired and revered, from the earliest ages, among the people of Gaul, Britain, Ireland, and the North; and indeed by almost all the first inhabitants of Europe, whether of Celtic or Gothic race;[\[1033\]](#) but by none more than by our own Teutonic ancestors, [\[1034\]](#) particularly by all the Danish tribes.[\[1035\]](#) Among these they were distinguished by the name of Scalds, a word which denotes "Smoother and Polishers of language."[\[1036\]](#) The origin of their art was attributed to Odin or Woden, the father of their gods; and the professors of it were held in the highest estimation. Their skill was considered as something divine; their persons were deemed sacred; their attendance was solicited by kings; and they were everywhere loaded with honours and rewards. In short, Poets and their art were held among them [\[Pg 347\]](#)in that rude admiration, which is ever shewn by an ignorant people to such as excel them in intellectual accomplishments.

As these honours were paid to Poetry and Song, from the earliest times, in those countries which our Anglo-Saxon ancestors inhabited before their removal into Britain, we may reasonably conclude that they would not lay aside all their regard for men of this sort immediately on quitting their German forests. At least so long as they retained their ancient manners and opinions, they would still hold them in high estimation. But as the Saxons, soon after their establishment in this island, were converted to Christianity; in proportion as literature prevailed among them, this rude admiration would begin to abate, and Poetry would be no longer a peculiar profession. Thus the Poet and the Minstrel early with us became two persons.[\[D\]](#) Poetry was cultivated by men of letters indiscriminately, and many of the most popular rhymes were composed amidst the leisure and retirement of monasteries. But the Minstrels continued a distinct order of men for many ages after the Norman Conquest, and got their livelihood by singing verses to the harp at the houses of the great.[\[E\]](#) There they were still hospitably and respectfully received, and retained many of the honours shewn to their predecessors, the Bards and Scalds.[\[F\]](#) And though, as their art declined, many of them only recited the compositions of others, some of them still composed songs themselves, and all of them could probably invent a few stanzas on occasion. I have no doubt but most of the old heroic ballads in this collection were composed by this order of men; for although some of the larger metrical romances might come from the pen of the monks or others, yet the smaller narratives were probably composed by the minstrels who sang them. From the amazing variations which occur in different copies of the old pieces, it is evident they made no scruple to alter each other's productions; and the reciter added or omitted whole stanzas according to his own fancy or convenience.

In the early ages, as was hinted above, the profession of oral itinerant poet was held in the utmost reverence among all the Danish tribes; and therefore we might have concluded that it was not unknown or unrespected among their Saxon brethren in Britain, even if history had been altogether silent on this subject. The original country of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors is well known to have lain chiefly in the Cimbric Chersonese, in the tracts of land since distinguished by the name of Jutland, Angelen, and Holstein.[\[1037\]](#) The Jutes and Angles in particular, who composed two-thirds of the conquerors of Britain, were a Danish people, and their country at this day belongs to the crown of Denmark;[\[1038\]](#) so that when the Danes again infested England, three or four hundred years after, they made war on the descendants of their own ancestors.[\[1039\]](#) From this near affinity we might expect to discover a strong resemblance between both nations in their customs, manners, and even language; and, in fact, we find them to differ no more than would naturally happen between a parent country and its own colonies, that had been severed in a rude, uncivilized state, and had dropt all [\[Pg 349\]](#)intercourse for three or four centuries, especially if we reflect that the colony here settled had adopted a new religion, extremely opposite in all respects to the ancient paganism of the mother country; and that even at first, along with the original Angli, had been incorporated a large mixture of Saxons from the neighbouring parts of Germany; and afterwards, among the Danish invaders, had come vast multitudes of adventurers from the more northern parts of Scandinavia. But all these were only different tribes of the same common Teutonic stock, and spoke only different dialects of the same Gothic language.[\[1040\]](#)

From this sameness of origin and similarity of manners we might justly have wondered if a character so dignified and distinguished among the ancient Danes as the Scald or Bard, had been totally unknown or unregarded in this sister nation. And, indeed, this argument is so strong, and, at the same time, the early annals of the Anglo-Saxons are so scanty and defective,[\[G\]](#) that no objections from their silence could be sufficient to overthrow it. For if these popular bards were confessedly revered and admired in those very countries which the Anglo-Saxons inhabited before their removal into Britain, and if they were afterwards common and numerous among the other descendants of the same Teutonic ancestors, can we do otherwise than conclude that men of this order accompanied such tribes as migrated hither, that they afterwards subsisted here, though perhaps with less splendor than in the North, and that there never was wanting a succession of them to hand down the art, though some particular conjunctures may have rendered it more respectable at one time than another? And this was evidently the case; for though much greater honours [\[Pg 350\]](#)seem to have been heaped upon the

northern Scalds, in whom the characters of historian, genealogist, poet, and musician were all united, than appear to have been paid to the minstrels and harpers[H] of the Anglo-Saxons, whose talents were chiefly calculated to entertain and divert, while the Scalds professed to inform and instruct, and were at once the moralists and theologues of their pagan countrymen. Yet the Anglo-Saxon minstrels continued to possess no small portion of public favour, and the arts they professed were so extremely acceptable to our ancestors that the word "Glee," which particularly denoted their art, continues still in our own language to be of all others the most expressive of that popular mirth and jollity, that strong sensation of delight, which is felt by unpolished and simple minds.[I]

II. Having premised these general considerations, I shall now proceed to collect from history such particular incidents as occur on this subject; and, whether the facts themselves are true or not, they are related by authors who lived too near the Saxon times, and had before them too many recent monuments of the Anglo-Saxon nation, not to know what was conformable to the genius and manners of that people; and therefore we may presume that their relations prove at least the existence of the customs and habits they attribute to our forefathers before the Conquest, whatever becomes of the particular incidents and events themselves. If this be admitted, we shall not want sufficient proofs to show that minstrelsy and song were not extinct among the Anglo-Saxons, and that the professor of them here, if not quite so respectable a personage as the Danish Scald, was yet highly favoured and protected, and continued still to enjoy considerable privileges.

Even so early as the first invasion of Britain by[Pg 351] the Saxons an incident is recorded to have happened, which, if true, shews that the minstrel or bard was not unknown among this people, and that their princes themselves could, upon occasion, assume that character. Colgrin, son of that Ella who was elected king or leader of the Saxons in the room of Hengist,[1041] was shut up in York, and closely besieged by Arthur and his Britons. Baldulph, brother of Colgrin, wanted to gain access to him, and to apprize him of a reinforcement which was coming from Germany. He had no other way to accomplish his design but to assume the character of a minstrel. He therefore shaved his head and beard, and dressing himself in the habit of that profession, took his harp in his hand. In this disguise he walked up and down the trenches without suspicion, playing all the while upon his instrument as an harper. By little and little he advanced near to the walls of the city, and, making himself known to the sentinels, was in the night drawn up by a rope.

Although the above fact comes only from the suspicious pen of Geoffry of Monmouth,[K] the judicious reader will not too hastily reject it, because, if such a fact really happened, it could only be known to us through the medium of the British writers: for the first Saxons, a martial but unlettered people, had no historians of their own; and Geoffry, with all his fables, is allowed to have recorded many true events that have escaped other annalists.

We do not, however, want instances of a less fabulous æra, and more indubitable authority: for later history affords us two remarkable facts,[L] which I think clearly shew that the same arts of poetry and song, which were so much admired among the Danes, [Pg 352]were by no means unknown or neglected in this sister nation, and that the privileges and honours which were so lavishly bestowed upon the northern Scalds, were not wholly withheld from the Anglo-Saxon minstrels.

Our great King Alfred, who is expressly said to have excelled in music,[1042] being desirous to learn the true situation of the Danish army, which had invaded his realm, assumed the dress and character of a minstrel,[M] when, taking his harp, and one of the most trusty of his friends disguised as a servant[1043] (for in the early times it was not unusual for a minstrel to have a servant to carry his harp), he went with the utmost security into the Danish camp; and, though he could not but be known to be a Saxon by his dialect, the character he had assumed procured him a hospitable reception. He was admitted to entertain the king at table, and staid among them long enough to contrive that assault which afterwards destroyed them. This was in the year 878.

About fifty years after,[\[1044\]](#) a Danish king made use of the same disguise to explore the camp of our king Athelstan. With his harp in his hand, and dressed like a minstrel,[\[N\]](#) Aulaff,[\[1045\]](#) king of the Danes, went among the Saxon tents; and, taking his stand near the king's pavilion, began to play, and was immediately admitted. There he entertained Athelstan and his lords with his singing and his music, and was [\[Pg 353\]](#)at length dismissed with an honourable reward, though his songs must have discovered him to have been a Dane.[\[Q\]](#) Athelstan was saved from the consequences of this stratagem by a soldier, who had observed Aulaff bury the money which had been given him, either from some scruple of honour or motive of superstition. This occasioned a discovery.

Now, if the Saxons had not been accustomed to have minstrels of their own, Alfred's assuming so new and unusual a character would have excited suspicions among the Danes. On the other hand, if it had not been customary with the Saxons to shew favour and respect to the Danish Scalds, Aulaff would not have ventured himself among them, especially on the eve of a battle.[\[P\]](#) From the uniform procedure, then, of both these kings, we may fairly conclude that the same mode of entertainment prevailed among both people, and that the minstrel was a privileged character with each.

But if these facts had never existed, it can be proved from undoubted records that the minstrel was a regular and stated officer in the court of our Anglo-Saxon kings: for in Doomesday book, "Joculator Regis," the king's minstrel, is expressly mentioned in Gloucestershire, in which county it should seem that he had lands assigned him for his maintenance.[\[Q\]](#)

III. We have now brought the inquiry down to the Norman Conquest; and as the Normans had been a late colony from Norway and Denmark, where the Scalds had arrived to the highest pitch of credit before Rollo's expedition into France, we cannot doubt but this adventurer, like the other northern princes, had many of these men in his train, who settled with him in his new duchy of Normandy, and left behind them successors in their art; so that when his descendant, William the Bastard, invaded[\[Pg 354\]](#) this kingdom in the following century,[\[1046\]](#) that mode of entertainment could not but be still familiar with the Normans. And that this is not mere conjecture will appear from a remarkable fact, which shews that the arts of poetry and song were still as reputable among the Normans in France as they had been among their ancestors in the north; and that the profession of Minstrel, like that of Scald, was still aspired to by the most gallant soldiers. In William's army was a valiant warrior, named Taillefer, who was distinguished no less for the minstrel-arts,[\[R\]](#) than for his courage and intrepidity. This man asked leave of his commander to begin the onset, and obtained it. He accordingly advanced before the army, and with a loud voice animated his countrymen with songs in praise of Charlemagne and Roland, and other heroes of France; then rushing among the thickest of the English, and valiantly fighting, lost his life.

Indeed, the Normans were so early distinguished for their minstrel-talents, that an eminent French writer[\[S\]](#) makes no scruple to refer to them the origin of all modern poetry, and shews that they were celebrated for their songs near a century before the troubadours of Provence, who are supposed to have led the way to the poets of Italy, France, and Spain.[\[1047\]](#)

We see then that the Norman Conquest was rather likely to favour the establishment of the minstrel profession in this kingdom, than to suppress it: and although the favour of the Norman conquerors would be probably confined to such of their own[\[Pg 355\]](#) countrymen as excelled in the minstrel arts—and in the first ages after the Conquest, no other songs would be listened to by the great nobility but such as were composed in their own Norman French—yet as the great mass of the original inhabitants were not extirpated, these could only understand their own native gleemen or minstrels; who must still be allowed to exist, unless it can be proved that they were all proscribed and massacred, as, it is said, the Welsh Bards were afterwards by the severe policy of King Edward I. But this we know was not the case; and even the cruel attempts of that monarch, as we shall see below, proved ineffectual.[\[S2\]](#)

The honours shewn to the Norman or French minstrels by our princes and great barons, would naturally have been imitated by their English vassals and tenants, even if no favour or distinction had ever been shewn here to the same order

of men, in the Anglo-Saxon and Danish reigns. So that we cannot doubt but the English harper and songster would, at least in a subordinate degree, enjoy the same kind of honours, and be received with similar respect among the inferior English gentry and populace. I must be allowed, therefore, to consider them as belonging to the same community, as subordinate members at least of the same college; and therefore, in gleaning the scanty materials for this slight history, I shall collect whatever incidents I can find relating to minstrels and their art, and arrange them, as they occur in our own annals, without distinction, as it will not always be easy to ascertain, from the slight mention of them by our regular historians, whether the artists were Norman or English; for it need not be remarked that subjects of this trivial nature are but incidentally mentioned by our ancient annalists, and were fastidiously rejected by other grave and serious[Pg 356] writers; so that, unless they were accidentally connected with such events as became recorded in history, they would pass unnoticed through the lapse of ages, and be as unknown to posterity as other topics relating to the private life and amusements of the greatest nations.

On this account it can hardly be expected that we should be able to produce regular and unbroken annals of the minstrel art and its professors, or have sufficient information whether every minstrel or harper composed himself, or only repeated, the songs he chanted. Some probably did the one, and some the other: and it would have been wonderful indeed if men whose peculiar profession it was, and who devoted their time and talents to entertain their hearers with poetical compositions, were peculiarly deprived of all poetical genius themselves, and had been under a physical incapacity of composing those common popular rhymes which were the usual subjects of their recitation. Whoever examines any considerable quantity of these, finds them in style and colouring as different from the elaborate production of the sedentary composer at his desk or in his cell, as the rambling harper or minstrel was remote in his modes of life and habits of thinking from the retired scholar, or the solitary monk.[\[T\]](#)

It is well known that on the Continent, whence our Norman nobles came, the bard who composed, the harper who played and sang, and even the dancer and the mimic, were all considered as of one community, and were even all included under the common name of Minstrels.[\[1048\]](#) I must therefore be allowed the same application of the term here without being expected to prove that every singer [Pg 357]composed, or every composer chanted, his own song; much less that every one excelled in all the arts, which were occasionally exercised by some or other of this fraternity.

IV. After the Norman Conquest, the first occurrence which I have met with relating to this order of men is the founding of a priory and hospital by one of them: scil. the Priory and Hospital of St. Bartholomew, in Smithfield, London, by Royer or Raherus, the King's Minstrel, in the third year of King Henry I. A.D. 1102. He was the first prior of his own establishment, and presided over it to the time of his death.[\[T2\]](#)

In the reign of K. Henry II. we have upon record the name of Galfrid or Jeffrey, a harper, who in 1180 received a corrody or annuity from the Abbey of Hyde, near Winchester: and, as in the early times every harper was expected to sing, we cannot doubt but this reward was given to him for his music and his songs; which, if they were for the solace of the monks there, we may conclude would be in the English language.[\[U\]](#)

Under his romantic son, K. Richard I., the minstrel profession seems to have acquired additional splendor. Richard, who was the great hero of chivalry, was also the distinguished patron of poets and minstrels. He was himself of their number, and some of his poems are still extant.[\[1049\]](#) They were no less patronized by his favourites and chief officers. His Chancellor, William Bishop of Ely, is expressly [Pg 358]mentioned to have invited singers and minstrels from France, whom he loaded with rewards; and they in return celebrated him as the most accomplished person in the world.[\[U2\]](#) This high distinction and regard, although confined, perhaps, in the first instance to poets and songsters of the French nation, must have had a tendency to do honour to poetry and song among all his subjects, and to encourage the cultivation of these arts among the natives, as the indulgent favour shewn by the monarch or his great courtiers to the Provençal

Troubadour, or Norman *Rymour*, would naturally be imitated by their inferior vassals to the English gleeman or minstrel. At more than a century after the Conquest, the national distinctions must have begun to decline, and both the Norman and English languages would be heard in the houses of the great[U3]; so that probably about this æra, or soon after, we are to date that remarkable intercommunity and exchange of each other's compositions which we discover to have taken place at some early period between the French and English minstrels: the same set of phrases, the same species of characters, incidents, and adventures, and often the same identical stories being found in the old metrical romances of both nations.

[V]

The distinguished service which Richard received from one of his own minstrels, in rescuing him from his cruel and tedious captivity, is a remarkable fact, which ought to be recorded for the honour of poets and their art. This fact I shall relate in the following words of an ancient writer.[1050]

[Pg 359]

"The Englishmen were more then a whole yeare, without hearing any tydings of their king, or in what place he was kept prisoner. He had trained up in his court a Rimer or Minstrill,[1051] called Blondell de Nesle: who (so saith the Manuscript of old Poesies,[1052] and an auncient manuscript French Chronicle) being so long without the sight of his lord, his life seemed wearisome to him, and he became confounded with melancholly. Knowne it was, that he came backe from the Holy Land: but none could tell in what countrey he arrived. Whereupon this Blondel, resolving to make search for him in many countries, but he would heare some newes of him; after expence of divers dayes in travaile, he came to a towne[1053] (by good hap) neere to the castell where his maister king Richard was kept. Of his host he demanded to whom the castell appertained, and the host told him, that it belonged to the duke of Austria. Then he enquired whether there were [Pg 360]any prisoners therein detained or no: for alwayes he made such secret questionings wheresoever he came. And the hoste gave answer, there was one onely prisoner, but he knew not what he was, and yet he had bin detained there more then the space of a yeare. When Blondel heard this, he wrought such meanes, that he became acquainted with them of the castell, *as Minstrels doe easily win acquaintance any where*: [1054] but see the king he could not, neither understand that it was he. One day he sat directly before a window of the castell, where king Richard was kept prisoner, and began to sing a song in French, which king Richard and Blondel had sometime composed together. When king Richard heard the song, he knew it was Blondel that sung it: and when Blondel paused at halfe of the song, the king *'began the other half and completed it.'* [1055] Thus Blondel won knowledge of the king his maister, and returning home into England, made the barons of the countrie acquainted where the king was." This happened about the year 1193.

The following old Provençal lines are given as the very original song:[1056] which I shall[Pg 361] accompany with an imitation offered by Dr. Burney (ii. 237.)

BLONDEL.

<i>Domna vostra beutas</i>	Your beauty, lady fair,
<i>Elas bellas faissos</i>	None views without delight;
<i>Els bels oils amors</i>	But still so cold an air
<i>Els gens cors ben taillats</i>	No passion can excite:
<i>Don sieu empresenats</i>	Yet this I patient see
<i>De vostra amor que mi lia.</i>	While all are shun'd like me.

RICHARD.

<i>Si bel trop affansia</i>	No nymph my heart can wound
<i>Ja de vos non portrai</i>	If favour she divide,
<i>Que major honorai</i>	And smiles on all around
<i>Sol en votre deman</i>	Unwilling to decide:
<i>Que sautra des beisan</i>	I'd rather hatred bear
<i>Tot can de vos volria.</i>	Than love with others share.

The access which Blondel so readily obtained in the privileged character of a minstrel, is not the only instance upon record of the same nature.[\[V2\]](#) In this very reign of K. Richard I. the young heiress of D'Evreux, Earl of Salisbury, had been carried abroad and secreted by her French relations in Normandy. To discover the place of her concealment, a knight of the Talbot family spent two years in exploring that province: at first under the disguise of a pilgrim, till having found where she was confined, in order to gain admittance he assumed the dress and character of a harper, and being a jocose person exceedingly skilled in "the Gestes of the ancients"[\[1057\]](#)—so they called the romances and stories which were the delight of that age—he was gladly received into the family, whence [\[Pg 362\]](#)he took an opportunity to carry off the young lady, whom he presented to the king; and he bestowed her on his natural brother William Longespee (son of fair Rosamond), who became in her right Earl of Salisbury. [\[V3\]](#)

The next memorable event which I find in history, reflects credit on the English minstrels; and this was their contributing to the rescue of one of the great Earls of Chester when besieged by the Welsh. This happened in the reign of K. John, and is related to this effect:[\[1058\]](#)—

Hugh the first Earl of Chester, in his charter of foundation of St. Werburg's Abbey in that city, had granted such a privilege to those, who should come to Chester fair, that they should not be then apprehended for theft or any other misdemeanor, except the crime were committed during the fair. This special protection, occasioning a multitude of loose people to resort to that fair, was afterwards of signal benefit to one of his successors. For Ranulph the last Earl of Chester, marching into Wales with a slender attendance, was constrained to retire to his castle of Rothelan (or Rhuydland) to which the Welsh forthwith laid siege. In this distress he sent for help to the Lord De Lacy, Constable of Chester: "Who, making use of the minstrells of all sorts, then met at Chester fair, by the allurement of their musick, got together a vast number of such loose people, as, by reason of the before specified priviledge, were then in that city; whom he forthwith sent under the conduct of Dutton (his steward)," a gallant youth, who was also his son in law. The Welsh, alarmed at the approach of this rabble, [\[Pg 363\]](#)supposing them to be a regular body of armed and disciplined veterans, instantly raised the siege and retired.

For this good service Ranulph is said to have granted to De Lacy by charter the patronage and authority over the minstrels and the loose and inferior people; who, retaining to himself that of the lower artificers, conferred on Dutton the jurisdiction of the minstrels and harlots:[\[1059\]](#) and under the descendants of this family the minstrels enjoyed certain privileges, and protection for many ages. For even so late as the reign of Elizabeth, when this profession had fallen into such discredit that it was considered in law as a nuisance, the minstrels under the jurisdiction of the family of Dutton are expressly excepted out of all acts of parliament made for their suppression; and have continued to be so excepted ever since.[\[W\]](#)

The ceremonies attending the exercise of this jurisdiction are thus described by Dugdale[\[1060\]](#) as handed down to his time, viz. "That at midsummer fair there, all the minstrels of that countrey resorting to Chester, do attend the heir of Dutton, from his lodging to St. John's church (he being then accompanied by many gentlemen of the countrey) one of 'the minstrels' walking before him in a surcoat of his arms depicted on taffata; the rest of his fellows proceeding (two and two) and playing on their several sorts of musical instruments. And after divine service ended, give the like attendance on him

back to his lodging; where a court being kept by his (Mr. Dutton's) Steward, and all the minstrels formally called, certain orders and laws are usually made for the better government of that Society, with penalties on those who transgress."

[Pg 364]

In the same reign of K. John we have a remarkable instance of a minstrel, who to his other talents superadded the character of Soothsayer, and by his skill in drugs and medicated potions was able to rescue a knight from imprisonment. This occurs in Leland's Narrative of the Gestes of Guarine (or Warren) and his sons, which he "excerptid owte of an old Englisch boke yn ryme,"[\[1061\]](#) and is as follows:

Whittington Castle, in Shropshire, which together with the coheiress of the original proprietor had been won in a solemn tournament by the ancestor of the Guarines,[\[1062\]](#) had in the reign of K. John been seized by the Prince of Wales, and was afterwards possessed by Morice, a retainer of that Prince, to whom the king out of hatred to the true heir Fulco Guarine (with whom he had formerly had a quarrel at Chess)[\[1063\]](#) not only confirmed the possession, but also made him governor of the marches, of which Fulco himself had the custody in the time of K. Richard. The Guarines demanded justice of the king, but obtaining no gracious answer, renounced their allegiance and fled into Bretagne. Returning into England, after various conflicts, "Fulco resortid to one John of Raumpayne, a Sothsayer and Jocular and Minstrelle, [Pg 365]and made hym his spy to Morice at Whittington." The privileges of this character we have already seen, and John so well availed himself of them, that in consequence of the intelligence which he doubtless procured, "Fulco, and his brethrene laide waite for Morice, as he went toward Salesbyri, and Fulco ther woundid hym: and Bracy" (a knight, who was their friend and assistant), "cut of Morices hedde." This sir Bracy being in a subsequent rencounter sore wounded, was taken and brought to K. John; from whose vengeance he was however rescued by this notable minstrel; for "John Rampayne founde the meanes to cast them, that kepte Bracy, into a deadely slepe; and so he and Bracy cam to Fulco to Whittington," which on the death of Morice had been restored to him by the Prince of Wales. As no further mention occurs of the minstrel, I might here conclude this narrative; but I shall just add, that Fulco was obliged to flee into France, where assuming the name of Sir Amice, he distinguished himself in justs and tournaments; and, after various romantic adventures by sea and land (having in the true stile of chivalry rescued "certayne ladies owt of prison"), he finally obtained the king's pardon, and the quiet possession of Whittington Castle.

In the reign of K. Henry III. we have mention of Master Richard the King's harper, to whom in his 36th year (1252) that monarch gave not only forty shillings, and a pipe of wine, but also a pipe of wine to Beatrice his wife.[\[1064\]](#) The title of *magister*, or master, given to this minstrel deserves notice, and shews his respectable situation.

[Pg 366]

V. The harper, or minstrel, was so necessary an attendant on a royal personage, that Prince Edward (afterwards K. Edward I.) in his Crusade to the Holy Land, in 1271, was not without his harper, who must have been officially very near his person, as we are told by a contemporary historian[\[1065\]](#) that, in the attempt to assassinate that heroic prince, when he had wrested the poisoned knife out of the Sarazen's hand and killed him with his own weapon, the attendants, who had stood apart while he was whispering to their master, hearing the struggle, ran to his assistance, and one of them, to wit his harper, seizing a tripod or trestle, struck the assassin on the head and beat out his brains.[\[1066\]](#) And though the Prince blamed him for striking the man after he was dead, yet his near access shews the respectable situation of this officer; and his affectionate zeal should have induced Edward to entreat his brethren the Welsh Bards afterwards with more lenity.

Whatever was the extent of this great monarch's severity towards the professors of music and of song in Wales; whether the executing by martial law such of them as fell into his hands was only during the heat of conflict, or was continued afterwards with more systematic rigor;[\[1067\]](#) yet in his own court the minstrels [Pg 367]appear to have been highly

favoured; for when, in 1306, he conferred the order of knighthood on his son, and many others of the young nobility, a multitude of minstrels were introduced to invite and induce the new knights to make some military vow.[\[X\]](#) And Under the succeeding reign of K. Edward II. such extensive privileges were claimed by these men, and by dissolute persons assuming their character, that it became a matter of public grievance, and was obliged to be reformed by an express regulation in A.D. 1315.[\[Y\]](#) Notwithstanding which, an incident is recorded in the ensuing year, which shews that minstrels still retained the liberty of entering at will into the royal presence, and had something peculiarly splendid in their dress. It is thus related by Stow.[\[Z\]](#)

"In the year 1316, Edward the second did solemnize his feast of Pentecost at Westminster, in the great hall: where sitting royally at the table with his peers about him, there entered a woman *adorned like a minstrel*, sitting on a great horse trapped, *as minstrels then used*; who rode round about the tables, shewing pastime; and at length came up to the king's table, and laid before him a letter, and forthwith turning her horse saluted every one and departed."——The subject of this letter was a remonstrance to the king on the favours heaped by him on his minions, to the neglect of his knights and faithful servants.

The privileged character of a minstrel was employed on this occasion, as sure of gaining an easy admittance; and a female the rather deputed to assume it, that in case of detection, her sex might disarm the [Pg 368]king's resentment. This is offered on a supposition, that she was not a real minstrel; for there should seem to have been women of this profession, [\[Aa\]](#) as well as of the other sex; and no accomplishment is so constantly attributed to females, by our ancient bards, as their singing to and playing on the harp.[\[Aa2\]](#)

In the fourth year of K. Richard II. John of Gaunt erected at Tutbury in Staffordshire, a court of minstrels, similar to that annually kept at Chester (p. 363), and which, like a Court-Leet or Court-Baron, had a legal jurisdiction, with full power to receive suit and service from the men of this profession within five neighbouring countries, to enact laws, and determine their controversies; and to apprehend and arrest such of them as should refuse to appear at the said court, annually held on the 16th of August. For this they had a charter by which they were empowered to appoint a king of the minstrels, with four officers to preside over them.[\[Bb\]](#) These were every year elected with great ceremony; the whole form of which as observed in 1680, is described by Dr. Plott:[\[1068\]](#) in whose time however they appear to have lost their singing talents, and to have confined all their skill to "wind and string music."[\[1069\]](#)

The minstrels seem to have been in many respects upon the same footing as the heralds; and the king of the minstrels, like the king at arms, was both here [Pg 369]and on the Continent an usual officer in the courts of princes. Thus we have in the reign of K. Edward I. mention of a King Robert, and others. And in 16 Edw. II. is a grant to William de Morlee "the king's Minstrel, stiled *Roy de North*,"[\[1070\]](#) of houses which had belonged to another king, John le Boteler.[\[Bb2\]](#) Rymer hath also printed a licence granted by K. Richard II. in 1387, to John Caumz, the king of his minstrels, to pass the seas, recommending him to the protection and kind treatment of all his subjects and allies.[\[1071\]](#)

In the subsequent reign of K. Henry IV. we meet with no particulars relating to the minstrels in England, but we find in the Statute Book a severe law passed against their brethren the Welsh bards; whom our ancestors could not distinguish from their own *Rimours*, *Ministralx*; for by these names they describe them.[\[Bb3\]](#) This act plainly shews that far from being extirpated by the rigorous policy of K. Edward I., this order of men were still able to alarm the English government, which attributed to them "many diseases and mischiefs in Wales," and prohibited their meetings and contributions.

When his heroic son K. Henry V. was preparing his great voyage for France in 1415, an express order was given for his minstrels, fifteen in number, to attend him:[\[1072\]](#) and eighteen are afterwards mentioned, to each of whom he allowed *xxiid.* a day, when that sum must have been of more than ten times the value it is at present.[\[1073\]](#) Yet when he entered

London in triumph after the battle of Agincourt, he, from a [Pg 370] principle of humility, slighted the pageants and verses which were prepared to hail his return; and, as we are told by Holinshed, [1074] would not suffer "any Dities to be made and song by minstrels, of his glorious victorie; for that he would whollie have the praise and thanks altogether given to God." [Bb4] But this did not proceed from any disregard for the professors of music or of song; for at the feast of Pentecost which he celebrated in 1416, having the Emperor and the Duke of Holland for his guests, he ordered rich gowns for sixteen of his minstrels, of which the particulars are preserved by Rymer. [1075] And having before his death orally granted an annuity of 100 shillings to each of his minstrels, the grant was confirmed in the first year of his son K. Henry VI., A.D. 1423, and payment ordered out of the Exchequer. [1076]

The unfortunate reign of K. Henry VI. affords no occurrences respecting our subject; but in his 34th year, A.D. 1456, we have in Rymer [1077] a commission for impressing boys or youths, to supply vacancies by death among the king's minstrels; in which it is expressly directed that they shall be elegant in their [Pg 371]limbs, as well as instructed in the minstrel art, wherever they can be found, for the solace of his Majesty.

In the following reign, K. Edward IV. (in his 9th year, 1469) upon a complaint that certain rude husbandmen and artificers of various trades had assumed the title and livery of the king's minstrels, and under that colour and pretence had collected money in diverse parts of the kingdom and committed other disorders, the king grants to Walter Haliday, Marshal, and to seven others his own minstrels whom he names, a charter, [1078] by which he creates, or rather restores a fraternity or perpetual Gild (such, as he understands, the brothers and sisters of the fraternity of minstrels had in times past) to be governed by a Marshal appointed for life and by two wardens to be chosen annually; who are impowered to admit brothers and sisters into the said Gild, and are authorized to examine the pretensions of all such as affected to exercise the minstrel profession; and to regulate, govern, and punish them throughout the realm (those of Chester excepted).—This seems to have some resemblance to the Earl Marshal's Court among the heralds, and is another proof of the great affinity and resemblance which the minstrels bore to the members of the College of Arms.

It is remarkable that Walter Haliday, whose name occurs as marshal in the foregoing charter, had been retained in the service of the two preceding monarchs, K. Henry V. [1079] and VI.; [1080] nor is this the first time he is mentioned as marshal of the king's minstrels, for in the third year of this reign, 1464, he had a grant [Pg 372]from K. Edward of ten marks per annum during life directed to him with that title. [1081]

But besides their marshal, we have also in this reign mention of a Sergeant of the minstrels, who upon a particular occasion was able to do his royal master a singular service, wherein his confidential situation and ready access to the king at all hours is very apparent; for "as he [K. Edward IV.] was in the north contray in the monneth of Septembre, as he lay in his bedde, one namid Alexander Carlile, that was *Sariaunt of the Mynstrellis*, cam to him in grete hast, and badde hym aryse for he hadde enemyes cummyng for to take him, the which were within vi. or vii. mylis, of the which tydinges the king gretely marveylid, &c." [1082] This happened in the same year, 1469, wherein the king granted or confirmed the charter for the fraternity or Gild above-mentioned; yet this Alexander Carlisle is not one of the eight minstrels to whom that charter is directed. [1083]

The same charter was renewed by K. Henry VIII. in 1520, to John Gilman his then marshal, and to seven others his minstrels; [1084] and on the death of Gilman he granted in 1529 this office of Marshal of his minstrels to Hugh Wodehouse, [1085] whom I take to have borne the office of his serjeant over them. [1086]

[Pg 373]

VI. In all the establishments of royal and noble households, we find an ample provision made for the minstrels; and their situation to have been both honourable and lucrative. In proof of this it is sufficient to refer to the Household Book of the

Earl of Northumberland, A.D. 1512.[\[Cc\]](#) And the rewards they received so frequently recur in ancient writers that it is unnecessary to crowd the page with them here.[\[Cc2\]](#)

The name of minstrel seems however to have been gradually appropriated to the musician only, especially in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; yet we occasionally meet with applications of the term in its more enlarged meaning as including the singer, if not the composer of heroic or popular rhymes.[\[1087\]](#)

In the time of K. Henry VIII. we find it to have been a common entertainment to hear verses recited, or moral speeches learned for that purpose, by a set of men who got their livelihood by repeating them, and who intruded without ceremony into all companies; not only in taverns, but in the houses of the nobility themselves. This we learn from Erasmus, whose argument led him only to describe a species of these men who *did not sing* their compositions; but the others that *did*, enjoyed without doubt the same privileges.[\[Dd\]](#)

For even long after, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was usual "in places of assembly" for the company to be "desirous to heare of old adventures and valiaunces of noble knights in times past, as those of king Arthur, and his knights of the round table, Sir Bevys of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke and others like" in "short and long meetres, and by breaches or divisions (sc. Fits)[\[1088\]](#) to be more[\[Pg 374\]](#) commodiously sung to the harpe," as the reader may be informed by a courtly writer in 1589.[\[1089\]](#) Who himself had "written for pleasure a litle brief romance or historicall ditty ... of the Isle of Great Britaine" in order to contribute to such entertainment. And he subjoins this caution: "Such as have not premonition hereof" (viz. that his poem was written in short metre, &c. to be sung to the harpe in such places of assembly), "and consideration of the causes alledged, would peradventure reprove and disgrace every romance, or short historicall ditty for that they be not written in long meeters or verses Alexandrins," which constituted the prevailing versification among the poets or that age, and which no one now can endure to read.

And that the recital of such romances sung to the harp was at that time the delight of the common people, we are told by the same writer,[\[1090\]](#) who mentions that "common rimers" were fond of using rimes at short distances, "in small and popular musickes song by these Cantabanqui" (the said common rimers) "upon benches and barrels heads," &c. "or else by blind harpers or such like Taverne minstrels that give a fit of mirth for a groat; and their matter being for the most part stories of old time, as the Tale of Sir Topas, the reportes of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke, Adam Bell, and Clymme of the Clough, and such other old romances, or historicall rimes," &c. "also they be used in carols and rounds, and such light or lascivious poemes, which are commonly more commodiously uttered by these buffons, or vices in playes, then by any other person. Such were the rimes of Skelton (usurping the name of a poet[\[Pg 375\]](#) laureat) being in deede but a rude railing rimer, and all his doings ridiculous."[\[1091\]](#)

But although we find here that the minstrels had lost much of their dignity, and were sinking into contempt and neglect: yet that they still sustained a character far superior to anything we can conceive at present of the singers of old ballads, I think, may be inferred from the following representation.

When Queen Elizabeth was entertained at Killingworth Castle by the Earl of Leicester in 1575, among the many devices and pageants which were contrived for her entertainment, one of the personages introduced was to have been that of an ancient minstrel: whose appearance and dress are so minutely described by a writer there present,[\[1092\]](#) and give us so distinct an idea of the character, that I shall quote the passage at large.[\[Ee\]](#)

"A person very meet seemed he for the purpose, of a xlv years old, apparelled partly as he would himself. His cap off; his head seemly rounded Tonsler wise:[\[1093\]](#) fair kembered, that with a sponge daintily dipt in a little capon's greace was finely smoothed, to make it shine like a mallard's wing. His beard smugly shaven: and yet his shirt after the new trink, with ruffs fair starched, sleeked and glistening like a pair of new shoes, marshalled in good order with a setting stick, and strut, that

every ruff stood up like a wafer. A side (*i.e.* long) gown of Kendal green, [Pg 376]after the freshness of the year now, gathered at the neck with a narrow gorget, fastened afore with a white clasp and a keeper close up to the chin; but easily, for heat to undo when he list. Seemly begirt in a red caddis girdle: from that a pair of capped Sheffield knives hanging a' two sides. Out of his bosom drawn forth a lappet of his napkin[1094] edged with a blue lace, and marked with a true love, a heart, and a D for Damian, for he was but a batchelor yet.

"His gown had side (*i.e.* long) sleeves down to mid-leg, slit from the shoulder to the hand, and lined with white cotton. His doublet-sleeves of black worsted: upon them a pair of poynets[1095] of tawny chamlet laced along the wrist with blue threaden points, a wealt towards the hand of fustian-a-napes. A pair of red neather stocks. A pair of pumps on his feet, with a cross cut at the toes for corns: not new indeed, yet cleanly blackt with soot, and shining as a shoing horn.

"About his neck a red ribband suitable to his girdle. His harp in good grace dependent before him. His wrest[1096] tyed to a green lace and hanging by. Under the gorget of his gown a fair flaggon chain (pewter,[1097] for) silver, as a squire minstrel of Middlesex, that travelled the country this summer season, unto fairs and worshipful mens houses. From his chain hung a scutcheon, with metal and colour, resplendant upon his breast, of the ancient arms of Islington."

This minstrel is described as belonging to that [Pg 377]village. I suppose such as were retained by noble families wore the arms of their patrons hanging down by a silver chain as a kind of badge.[1098] From the expression of squire minstrel above, we may conclude there were other inferior orders, as yeomen minstrels or the like.

This minstrel, the author tells us a little below, "after three lowly courtesies, cleared his voice with a hem ... and ... wiped his lips with the hollow of his hand for 'filing his napkin, tempered a string or two with his wrest, and after a little warbling on his harp for a prelude, came forth with a solemn song, warranted for story out of King Arthur's acts, &c." This song the reader will find printed in this work, vol. iii. book i. No. 3.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century this class of men had lost all credit, and were sunk so low in the public opinion, that in the 39th year of Elizabeth,[1099] a statute was passed by which "minstrels, wandering abroad," were included among "rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars," and were adjudged to be punished as such. This act seems to have put an end to the profession.[Ee2]

[Pg 378]

VII. I cannot conclude this account of the ancient English minstrels, without remarking that they are most of them represented to have been of the North of England. There is scarce an old historical song or ballad [Ef] wherein a minstrel or harper appears, but he is characterized by way of eminence to have been "of the North countrey:"[1100] and, indeed, the prevalence of the Northern dialect in such compositions shews that this representation is real.[1101] On the other hand, the scene of the finest Scottish ballads is laid in the south of Scotland; which should seem to have been peculiarly the nursery of Scottish minstrels. In the old song of Maggy Lawder, a piper is asked, by way of distinction, "Come ye frae [Pg 379]the Border?"[1102] The martial spirit constantly kept up and exercised near the frontier of the two kingdoms, as it furnished continual subjects for their songs, so it inspired the inhabitants of the adjacent counties on both sides with the powers of poetry. Besides, as our southern metropolis must have been ever the scene of novelty and refinement, the northern countries, as being most distant, would preserve their ancient manners longest, and, of course, the old poetry, in which those manners are peculiarly described.

The reader will observe in the more ancient ballads of this collection, a cast of style and measure very different from that of contemporary poets of a higher class; many phrases and idioms, which the minstrels seem to have appropriated to themselves, and a very remarkable licence of varying the accent [Pg 380]of words at pleasure, in order to humour the flow

of the verse, particularly in the rhimes; as

<i>Countrie</i>	<i>harpèr</i>	<i>battèl</i>	<i>mornìng</i>
<i>Ladie</i>	<i>singèr</i>	<i>damsèl</i>	<i>lovìng,</i>

instead of *còuntry*, *làdy*, *hàrper*, *sìnger*, &c. This liberty is but sparingly assumed by the classical poets of the same age; or even by the latter composers of heroical ballads, I mean by such as professedly wrote for the press. For it is to be observed, that so long as the minstrels subsisted, they seem never to have designed their rhymes for literary publication, and probably never committed them to writing themselves; what copies are preserved of them were doubtless taken down from their mouths. But as the old minstrels gradually wore out, a new race of ballad-writers succeeded, an inferior sort of minor poets, who wrote narrative songs merely for the press. Instances of both may be found in the reign of Elizabeth. The two latest pieces in the genuine strain of the old minstrelsy that I can discover are No. 3 and 4 of book iii. in this volume. Lower than these I cannot trace the old mode of writing.

The old minstrel ballads are in the northern dialect, abound with antique words and phrases, are extremely incorrect, and run into the utmost licence of metre; they have also a romantic wildness, and are in the true spirit of chivalry. The other sort are written in exacter measure, have a low or subordinate correctness, sometimes bordering on the insipid, yet often well adapted to the pathetic; these are generally in the southern dialect, exhibit a more modern phraseology, and are commonly descriptive of more modern manners. To be sensible of the difference between them, let the reader compare[Pg 381] in this volume No. 3 of book iii. with No. 11 of book ii.

Towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign (as is mentioned above), the genuine old minstrelsy seems to have been extinct, and henceforth the ballads that were produced were wholly of the latter kind, and these came forth in such abundance that in the reign of James I. they began to be collected into little miscellanies, under the name of Garlands, and at length to be written purposely for such collections. [\[Ff2\]](#)

P.S. By way of postscript should follow here the discussion of the question whether the term Minstrels was applied in English to singers and composers of songs, &c. or confined to musicians only. But it is reserved for the concluding note. [\[Gg\]](#)

THE END OF THE ESSAY.

[Pg 382]



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING ESSAY.

• The foregoing essay on the ancient minstrels has been very much enlarged and improved since the first edition, with respect to the Anglo-Saxon minstrels, in consequence of some objections proposed by the reverend and learned Mr. Pegge, which the reader may find in the second volume of the *Archæologia*, printed by the Antiquarian Society: but which that gentleman has since retracted in the most liberal and candid manner in the third volume of the *Archæologia*, No. xxxiv. p.

And in consequence of similar objections respecting the English minstrels after the Conquest, the subsequent part hath been much enlarged, and additional light thrown upon the subject; which, to prevent cavil, hath been extended to minstrelsy in all its branches, as it was established in England, whether by natives or foreigners.

[Ritson made a searching examination of this essay, and dissented from many of the propositions contained in it. His essay "On the Ancient English Minstrels" will be found in his collection of *Ancient Songs and Ballads*.]

[Pg 431]

APPENDIX II.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE ENGLISH STAGE, &c.

I.



It is well known that dramatic poetry in this and most other nations of Europe owes its origin, or at least its revival, to those religious shows which in the dark ages were usually exhibited on the more solemn festivals. At those times they were wont to represent in the churches the lives and miracles of the saints, or some of the more important stories of scripture. And as the most mysterious subjects were frequently chosen, such as the Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ, &c., these exhibitions acquired the general name of mysteries. At first they were probably a kind of dumb shews, intermingled, it may be, with a few short speeches; at length they grew into a regular series of connected dialogues, formally divided into acts and scenes. Specimens of these in their most improved state (being at best but poor artless compositions) may be seen among Dodsley's *Old Plays* and in Osborne's *Harleian Miscel*. How they were exhibited in their most simple form we may learn from an ancient novel, often quoted by our old dramatic poets[\[1145\]](#) intitled ... "a merye jest of a man that was called[\[Pg 432\]](#) Howleglas"[\[1146\]](#), &c., being a translation from the Dutch language, in which he is named *Ulenspiegel*. Howleglass, whose waggish tricks are the subject of this book, after many adventures comes to live with a priest, who makes him his parish clerk. This priest is described as keeping a leman or concubine, who had but one eye, to whom Howleglass owed a grudge for revealing his rogueries to his master. The story thus proceeds: ... "And than in the meane season, while Howleglas was parysh clarke, at Easter they should play the Resurrection of our Lorde: and for because than the men wer not learned, nor could not read, the priest toke his leman, and put her in the grave for an Aungell: and this seing Howleglas, toke to hym iij of the symplest persons that were in the towne, that played the iij Maries; and the Person [*i.e.* Parson or Rector] played Christe, with a baner in his hand. Than saide Howleglas to the symple persons. Whan the Aungel asketh you, whome you seke, you may saye, The parsons leman with one iye. Than it fortuned that the tyme was come that they must playe, and the Aungel asked them whom they sought, and than sayd they, as Howleglas had shewed and lerned them afore, and than answered they, We seke the priests leman with one iye. And than the prieste might heare that he was mocked. And whan the priestes leman herd that, she arose out of the grave, and would have smyten with her fist Howleglas upon the cheke, but she missed him and smote one of the simple persons that played one of the thre Maries; and he gave her another; and than toke she him by the heare [hair]; and that seing his wyfe, came running hastely to smite the priestes leaman; and than the priest[\[Pg 433\]](#) seeing this, caste down hys baner and went

to helpe his woman, so that the one gave the other sore strokes, and made great noyse in the church. And than Howleglas seyng them lyinge together by the eares in the bodi of the church, went his way out of the village, and came no more there."[\[1147\]](#)

As the old mysteries frequently required the representation of some allegorical personage, such as Death, Sin, Charity, Faith, and the like, by degrees the rude poets of those unlettered ages began to form compleat dramatic pieces consisting entirely of such personifications. These they intitled moral plays, or moralities. The mysteries were very inartificial, representing the scripture stories simply according to the letter. But the moralities are not devoid of invention: they exhibit outlines of the dramatic art; they contain something of a fable or plot, and even attempt to delineate characters and manners. I have now before me two that were printed early in the reign of Henry VIII., in which, I think, one may plainly discover the seeds of tragedy and comedy, for which reason I shall give a short analysis of them both.

One of them is intitled *Every Man*.[\[1148\]](#) The subject of this piece is the summoning of man out of the world by death; and its moral, that nothing will then avail him but a well-spent life and the comforts of religion. This subject and moral are opened in a monologue spoken by the Messenger (for that was the name generally given by our ancestors to the prologue on their rude stage); then God[\[1149\]](#) [Pg 434] is represented, who, after some general complaints on the degeneracy of mankind, calls for Deth, and orders him to bring before his tribunal Every-man, for so is called the personage who represents the human race. Every-man appears, and receives the summons with all the marks of confusion and terror. When Death is withdrawn Every-man applies for relief in this distress to Fellowship, Kindred, Goods, or Riches, but they successively renounce and forsake him. In this disconsolate state he betakes himself to Good-dedes, who, after upbraiding him with his long neglect of her,[\[1150\]](#) introduces him to her sister Knowledge, and she leads him to the "holy man Confession," who appoints him penance; this he inflicts upon himself on the stage, and then withdraws to receive the sacraments of the priest. On his return he begins to wax faint, and after Strength, Beauty, Discretion, and Five Wits[\[1151\]](#) have all taken their final leave of him, gradually expires on the stage, Good-dedes still accompanying him to the last. Then an Aungell descends to sing his requiem, and the epilogue is spoken by a person called Doctour, who recapitulates the whole and delivers the moral:—

"C. This memoriall men may have in mynde,
Ye herers, take it of worth old and yonge,
And forsake Pryde, for he disceyveth you in thende,
And remembre Beautè, Five Witts, Strength and Discretion,
They all at last do Every-man forsake;
Save his Good Dedes there dothe he take;
But beware, for and they be small,
Before God he hath no helpe at all," &c.

[Pg 435]

From this short analysis it may be observed that *Every Man* is a grave, solemn piece, not without some rude attempts to excite terror and pity, and therefore may not improperly be referred to the class of tragedy. It is remarkable that in this old simple drama the fable is conducted upon the strictest model of the Greek tragedy. The action is simply one, the time of action is that of the performance, the scene is never changed, nor the stage ever empty. Every-man, the hero of the piece, after his first appearance never withdraws, except when he goes out to receive the sacraments, which could not well be exhibited in public, and during his absence Knowledge descants on the excellence and power of the priesthood, somewhat after the manner of the Greek chorus. And, indeed, except in the circumstance of Every-man's expiring on the stage, the Sampson Agonistes of Milton is hardly formed on a severer plan.[\[1152\]](#)

The other play is intitled *Hick Scorner*,[\[1153\]](#) and bears no distant resemblance to comedy; its chief aim seems to be to exhibit characters and manners, its plot being much less regular than the foregoing. The prologue is spoken by Pity, represented under the character of an aged pilgrim; he is joined by Contemplacyon and Perseverance, two holy men, who, after lamenting the degeneracy of the age, declare their resolution of stemming the torrent. Pity then is left upon the stage, and presently found by Frewyll, representing a lewd debauchee, who, with his dissolute companion Imaginacion, relate their manner of life, and not without humour[Pg 436] describe the stews and other places of base resort. They are presently joined by Hick-Scorner, who is drawn as a libertine returned from travel, and, agreeably to his name, scoffs at religion. These three are described as extremely vicious, who glory in every act of wickedness; at length two of them quarrel, and Pity endeavours to part the fray; on this they fall upon him, put him in the stocks, and there leave him. Pity, thus imprisoned, descants in a kind of lyric measure on the profligacy of the age, and in this situation is found by Perseverance and Contemplacion, who set him at liberty, and advise him to go in search of the delinquents. As soon as he is gone Frewyll appears again, and, after relating in a very comic manner some of his rogueries and escapes from justice, is rebuked by the two holy men, who, after a long altercation, at length convert him and his libertine companion Imaginacioun from their vicious course of life, and then the play ends with a few verses from Perseverance by way of epilogue. This and every morality I have seen conclude with a solemn prayer. They are all of them in rhyme, in a kind of loose stanza, intermixed with distichs.

It would be needless to point out the absurdities in the plan and conduct of the foregoing play; they are evidently great. It is sufficient to observe that bating the moral and religious reflection of Pity, etc., the piece is of a comic cast, and contains a humorous display of some of the vices of the age. Indeed, the author has generally been so little attentive to the allegory, that we need only substitute other names to his personages, and we have real characters and living manners.

We see then that the writers of these moralities were upon the very threshold of real tragedy and comedy, and therefore we are not to wonder that tragedies and comedies in form soon after took place,[\[Pg 437\]](#) especially as the revival of learning about this time brought them acquainted with the Roman and Grecian models.

II. At what period of time the moralities had their rise here it is difficult to discover, but plays of miracles appear to have been exhibited in England soon after the Conquest. Matthew Paris tells us that Geoffrey, afterwards Abbot of St. Albans, a Norman, who had been sent for over by Abbot Richard to take upon him the direction of the school of that monastery, coming too late, went to Dunstable and taught in the Abby there, where he caused to be acted (probably by his scholars) a miracle-play of St. Catharine, composed by himself.[\[1154\]](#) This was long before the year 1119, and probably within the eleventh century. The above play of St. Catharine was, for aught that appears, the first spectacle of this sort that was exhibited in these kingdoms, and an eminent French writer thinks it was even the first attempt towards the revival of dramatic entertainments in all Europe, being long before the representations of mysteries in France, for these did not begin till the year 1398.[\[1155\]](#)

But whether they derived their origin from the above exhibition or not, it is certain that holy plays, representing the miracles and sufferings of the [\[Pg 438\]](#)saints, were become common in the reign of Henry II., and a lighter sort of interludes appear not to have been then unknown.[\[1156\]](#) In the subsequent age of Chaucer, "Plays of Miracles" in Lent were the common resort of idle gossips.[\[1157\]](#)

They do not appear to have been so prevalent on the Continent, for the learned historian of the Council of Constance[\[1158\]](#) ascribes to the English the introduction of plays into Germany. He tells us that the Emperor, having been absent from the Council for some time, was at his return received with great rejoicings, and that the English fathers in particular did upon that occasion cause a sacred comedy to be acted before him on Sunday, Jan. 31, 1417, the subjects of which were:—"The Nativity of our Saviour;" "The Arrival of the Eastern Magi;" and "The Massacre by Herod." Thence it

appears, says this writer, that the Germans are obliged to the English for the invention of this sort of spectacles, unknown to them before that period.

The fondness of our ancestors for dramatic exhibitions of this kind, and some curious particulars [Pg 439]relating to this subject, will appear from the *Houshold Book* of the fifth Earl of Northumberland, A.D. 1512, [\[1159\]](#) whence I shall select a few extracts which show that the exhibiting Scripture dramas on the great festivals entered into the regular establishment, and formed part of the domestic regulations of our ancient nobility, and, what is more remarkable, that it was as much the business of the chaplain in those days to compose plays for the family as it is now for him to make sermons.

"My Lordes Chapleyns in Household vj. viz. The Almonar, and if he be a maker of Interludys, than he to have a servaunt to the intent for writynge of the parts; and ells to have non. The maister of gramer, &c."

Sect. v. p. 44.

"Item, my lorde usith and accustomyth to gyf yerely if his lordship kepe a chapell and be at home, them of his lordships chapell, if they doo play the Play of the *Nativite* uppon cristynmes day in the mornnyng in my lords chapell befor his lordship—xxs."

Sect. xlv. p. 343.

"Item, ... to them of his lordship chappell and other his lordshipis servaunts that doith play the Play befor his lordship uppon Shrof-Tewsdays at night yerely in reward—xs."

Ibid. p. [345](#).

"Item, ... to them ... that playth the Play of *Resurrection* upon estur day in the mornnyng in my lordis 'chapell' befor his lordshipe—xxs."

Ibid.

[Pg 440]

"Item, My lorde useth and accustomyth yerly to gyf hym which is ordynede to be the Master of the Revells yerly in my lordis hous in cristmas for the overseyng and orderinge of his lordships Playes, Interludes and Dresinge that is plaid befor his lordship in his hous in the xijth dayes of Cristenmas and they to have in rewarde for that caus yerly—xxs."

Ibid. p. [346](#).

"Item, My lorde useth and accustomyth to gyf every of the iiij Parsones that his lordship admyted as his Players to com to his lordship yerly at Cristynmes ande at all other such tymes as his lordship shall comande them for playing of Playe and Interludes affor his lordship in his lordshipis hous for every of their fees for an hole yere...."

Ibid. p. [351](#).

"Item, to be payd ... for rewards to Players for Playes playd in Christynmas by Stranegeres in my house after xxd. [\[1160\]](#) every play, by estimacion somme-xxxiijs. iiij. [\[1161\]](#)."

Sect. i. p. 22.

"Item, My Lorde usith, and accustometh to gif yerely when his Lordshipp is at home, to every erlis Players that comes to his Lordshipe betwixt Cristynmas ande Candelmas, if he be his special Lorde & Frende & Kynsman—xxs."

Sect. xliiii. p. 340.

"Item, My Lorde usith and accustomyth to gyf yerely, when his Lordship is at home to every Lordis Players, that comyth to his Lordshipe betwixt Crystynmas and Candilmas—xs."

Ibid.

The reader will observe the great difference in the [Pg 441]rewards here given to such players as were retainers of noble personages and such as are stiled strangers, or, as we may suppose, only strolers.

The profession of a common player was about this time held by some in low estimation. In an old satire intituled *Cock Lorrelles Bote*[\[1162\]](#) the author, enumerating the most common trades or callings, as "carpenters, coopers, joyners," &c., mentions—

"Players, purse-cutters, money-batterers,
Golde-washers, tomblers, jogelers,
Pardoners, &c."

Sign. B. vj.

III. It hath been observed already that plays of miracles, or mysteries, as they were called, led to the introduction of moral plays, or moralities, which prevailed so early and became so common that towards the latter end of K. Henry VII.'s reign John Rastel, brother-in-law to Sir Thomas More, conceived a design of making them the vehicle of science and natural philosophy. With this view he published. *A new interlude and a mery of the nature of the iiiii. elements declarynge many proper points of philosophy naturall, and of dyvers straunge landys*[\[1163\]](#), [Pg 442]&c. It is observable that the poet speaks of the discovery of America as then recent:

----"Within this xx yere
Westwarde be founde new landes
That we never harde tell of before this," &c.

The West Indies were discovered by Columbus in 1492, which fixes the writing of this play to about 1510 (two years before the date of the above *Houshold Book*). The play of *Hick-Scorner* was probably somewhat more ancient, as he still more imperfectly alludes to the American discoveries, under the name of "the Newe founde Ilonde." [Sign. A. vij.]

It is observable that in the older moralities, as in that last mentioned, *Every-man*, &c., is printed no kind of stage direction for the exits and entrances of the personages, no division of acts and scenes. But in the moral interlude of *Lusty Juventus*, [\[1164\]](#) written under Edward VI. the exits and entrances begin to be noted in the margin.[\[1165\]](#) At length in Q. Elizabeth's reign moralities appeared formally divided into acts and scenes with a regular prologue, &c. One of these is reprinted by Dodsley.

Before we quit this subject of the very early printed plays, it may just be observed that although so few are now extant it should seem many were printed before the reign of Q. Elizabeth, as at the beginning of her reign her injunctions in 1559 are particularly directed to the suppressing of "many [Pg 443]Pamphlets, Playes, and Ballads; that no manner of person shall enterprize to print any such, &c." but under certain restrictions. Vid. Sect. V.

In the time of Hen. VIII. one or two dramatic pieces had been published under the classical names of comedy and tragedy, [\[1166\]](#) but they appear not to have been intended for popular use. It was not till the religious ferments had subsided that the public had leisure to attend to dramatic poetry. In the reign of Elizabeth tragedies and comedies began to appear in form, and could the poets have persevered the first models were good. *Gorboduc*, a regular tragedy, was acted in 1561; [\[1167\]](#) and Gascoigne, in 1566, exhibited *Jocasta*, a translation from Euripides, as also *The Supposes*, a regular comedy from Ariosto, near thirty years before any of Shakespeare's were printed.

The people, however, still retained a relish for their old mysteries and moralities,[\[1168\]](#) and the popular dramatic poets seem to have made them their models. From the graver sort of moralities our modern tragedy appears to have derived its origin, as our comedy evidently took its rise from the [\[Pg 444\]](#)lighter interludes of that kind. And as most of these pieces contain an absurd mixture of religion and buffoonery, an eminent critic[\[1169\]](#) has well deduced from thence the origin of our unnatural tragi-comedies. Even after the people had been accustomed to tragedies and comedies moralities still kept their ground. One of them, intitled *The New Custom*,[\[1170\]](#) was printed so late as 1573. At length they assumed the name of masques,[\[1171\]](#) and with some classical improvements, became in the two following reigns the favourite entertainments of the Court.

IV. The old mysteries, which ceased to be acted after the Reformation, appear to have given birth to a third species of stage exhibition, which, though now confounded with tragedy and comedy, were by our first dramatic writers considered as quite distinct from them both. These were historical plays or histories, a species of dramatic writing which resembled the old mysteries in representing a series of historical events simply in the order of time in which they happened, without any regard to the three great unities. These pieces seem to differ from tragedies just as much as historical poems do from epic: as the *Pharsalia* does from the *Æneid*.

What might contribute to make dramatic poetry take this form was, that soon after the mysteries ceased to be exhibited, was published a large collection of poetical narratives, called *The Mirrour for Magistrates*,[\[1172\]](#) wherein a great number of the [\[Pg 445\]](#)most eminent characters in English history are drawn relating their own misfortunes. This book was popular, and of a dramatic cast; and therefore, as an elegant writer[\[1173\]](#) has well observed, might have its influence in producing historical plays. These narratives probably furnished the subjects, and the ancient mysteries suggested the plan.

There appears indeed to have been one instance of an attempt at an historical play itself, which was perhaps as early as any mystery on a religious subject, for such, I think, we may pronounce the representation of a memorable event in English history, that was expressed in actions and rhimes. This was the old Coventry play of Hock-Tuesday,[\[1174\]](#) founded on the story of the massacre of the Danes, as it happened on St. Brice's night, November 13, 1002.[\[1175\]](#) The play in question was performed by certain men of Coventry, among the other shews and entertainments at Kenelworth Castle, in July, 1575, prepared for Queen Elizabeth, and this the rather "because the matter mentioneth how valiantly our English women, for the love of their country, behaved themselves."

The writer, whose words are here quoted,[\[1176\]](#) hath given a short description of the performance, which seems on that occasion to have been without [\[Pg 446\]](#) recitation or rhimes, and reduced to meer dumb-show; consisting of violent skirmishes and encounters, first between Danish and English "lance-knights on horseback," armed with spear and shield, and afterwards between "hosts" of footmen, which at length ended in the Danes being "beaten down, overcome, and many led captive by our English women."[\[1177\]](#)

This play, it seems, which was wont to be exhibited in their city yearly, and which had been of great antiquity and long continuance there,[\[1178\]](#) had of late been suppressed at the instance of some well-meaning but precise preachers, of whose "sourness" herein the townsmen complain, urging that their play was "without example of ill-manners, papistry, or any superstition,"[\[1179\]](#) which shews it to have been entirely distinct from a religious mystery.[\[1180\]](#) But having been discontinued, and, as appears from the narrative, taken up of a sudden after the sports were begun, the players apparently had not been able to recover the old rhimes, or to procure new ones to accompany the action: which, if it originally represented "the outrage and importable insolency of the Danes, the grievous complaint of Huna, king Ethelred's chieftain in wars,"[\[1181\]](#) [\[Pg 447\]](#)his counselling and contriving the plot to dispatch them, concluding with the conflicts above mentioned, and their final suppression—"expressed in actions and rhimes after their manner,"[\[1182\]](#) one can hardly conceive a more regular model of a compleat drama; and, if taken up soon after the event, it must have been the earliest of

the kind in Europe.[\[1183\]](#)

Whatever this old play, or "storial show,"[\[1184\]](#) was at the time it was exhibited to Q. Elizabeth, it had probably our young Shakespeare for a spectator, who was then in his twelfth year, and doubtless attended with all the inhabitants of the surrounding country at these "princely pleasures of Kenelworth,"[\[1185\]](#) whence Stratford is only a few miles distant. And as the Queen was much diverted with the Coventry play, "whereat her Majestic laught well," and rewarded the performers with two bucks, and five marks in money, who, "what rejoicing upon their ample reward, and what triumphing upon the good acceptance, vaunted their play was never so dignified, nor ever any players before so beatified;" but especially if our young bard afterwards gained admittance into the castle to see a play, which the same evening, after supper, was there "presented of a very good theme, but so set forth by the actors' well handling, that pleasure and mirth made it seem very short, though it lasted two good hours and more,"[\[1186\]](#) we may imagine what an impression was made on his infant mind. Indeed the dramatic cast of many parts of that superb entertainment which continued nineteen [Pg 448]days, and was the most splendid of the kind ever attempted in this kingdom; the addresses to the Queen in the personated characters of a sybille, a savage man, and Sylvanus, as she approached or departed from the castle, and on the water by Arion, a Triton, or the Lady of the Lake, must have had a very great effect on a young imagination whose dramatic powers were hereafter to astonish the world.

But that the historical play was considered by our old writers, and by Shakespeare himself, as distinct from tragedy and comedy, will sufficiently appear from various passages in their works. "Of late days," says Stow, "in place of those stage-playes[\[1187\]](#) hath been used comedies, tragedies, enterludes, and histories both true and fayned."[\[1188\]](#) Beaumont and Fletcher, in the prologue to *The Captain*, say:

"This is nor Comedy, nor Tragedy,
Nor History."——

Polonius in *Hamlet* commends the actors as the best in the world, "either for tragedie, comedie, historie, pastorall," &c. And Shakespeare's friends, Heminge and Condell, in the first folio edit. of his plays, in 1623,[\[1189\]](#) have not only intitled their book "Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies," but in their table of contents have arranged them under those three several heads; placing in the class of histories "K. John, Richard II. Henry IV. 2 pts. Henry V. Henry [Pg 449]VI. 3 pts. Rich. III. and Henry VIII.", to which they might have added such of his other plays as have their subjects taken from the old chronicles, or Plutarch's *Lives*.

Although Shakespeare is found not to have been the first who invented this species of drama,[\[1190\]](#) yet he cultivated it with such superior success, and threw upon this simple inartificial tissue of scenes such a blaze of genius, that his histories maintain their ground in defiance of Aristotle and all the critics of the classic school, and will ever continue to interest and instruct an English audience. Before Shakespeare wrote, historical plays do not appear to have attained this distinction, being not mentioned in Q. Elizabeth's licence in 1574[\[1191\]](#) to James Burbage and others, who are only empowered "to use, exerceyse, and occupie the arte and facultye of playenge Commedies, Tragedies, Enterludes, Stage-Playes, and such other like." But when Shakespeare's histories had become the ornaments of the stage, they were considered by the publick, and by himself, as a formal and necessary species, and are thenceforth so distinguished in public instruments. They are particularly inserted in the licence granted by K. James I. in 1603,[\[1192\]](#) to W. Shakespeare himself, and the players his fellows; who are authorized "to use and exercise the arte and faculty of playing Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Interludes, Morals, Pastorals, Stage-Plaies, and such like."

The same merited distinction they continued to maintain after his death, till the theatre itself was extinguished: for they are expressly mentioned in a warrant in 1622, for licensing certain "late[Pg 450] Comedians of Q. Anne deceased, to bring up children in the qualitie and exercise of playing Comedies, Histories, Interludes, Morals, Pastorals, Stage-Plaies, and such

like." [1193] The same appears in an admonition issued in 1637 [1194] by Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, then Lord Chamberlain, to the master and wardens of the Company of Printers and Stationers, wherein is set forth the complaint of his Majesty's servants the players, that "diverse of their books of Comedyes and Tragedyes, Chronicle-Histories, and the like," had been printed and published to their prejudice, &c.

This distinction, we see, prevailed for near half a century; but after the Restoration, when the stage revived for the entertainment of a new race of auditors, many of whom had been exiled in France, and formed their taste from the French theatre, Shakespeare's histories appear to have been no longer relished; at least the distinction respecting them is dropt in the patents that were immediately granted after the king's return. This appears not only from the allowance to Mr. William Beeston in June, 1660, [1195] to use the house in Salisbury-court "for a Play-house, wherein Comedies, Tragedies, Tragicomedies, Pastoralls, and Interludes, may be acted," but also from the fuller grant (dated August 21, 1760), [1196] to [Pg 451] Thomas Killigrew, Esq., and Sir William Davenant, Knt., by which they have authority to erect two companies of players, and to fit up two theatres "for the representation of Tragydies, Comedyes, Playes, Operas, and all other entertainments of that nature."

But while Shakespeare was the favourite dramatic poet, his histories had such superior merit that he might well claim to be the chief, if not the only historic dramatist that kept possession of the English stage; which gives a strong support to the tradition mentioned by Gildon, [1197] that, in a conversation with Ben Jonson, our bard vindicated his historical plays by urging, that as he had found "the nation in general very ignorant of history, he wrote them in order to instruct the people in this particular." This is assigning not only a good motive, but a very probable reason for his preference of this species of composition; since we cannot doubt but his illiterate countrymen would not only want such instruction when he first began to write, notwithstanding the obscure dramatic chroniclers who preceded him, but also that they would highly profit by his admirable lectures on English history so long as he continued to deliver them to his audience. And as it implies no claim to his being the *first* who introduced our chronicles on the stage, I see not why the tradition should be rejected.

Upon the whole we have had abundant proof that both Shakespeare and his contemporaries considered his histories, or historical plays, as of a legitimate distinct species, sufficiently separate from tragedy and comedy, a distinction which deserves the particular attention of his critics and commentators; [Pg 452] who, by not adverting to it, deprive him of his proper defence and best vindication for his neglect of the unities, and departure from the classical dramatic forms. For, if it be the first canon of sound criticism to examine any work by whatever rule the author prescribed for his own observance, then we ought not to try Shakespeare's histories by the general laws of tragedy or comedy. Whether the rule itself be vicious or not is another inquiry: but certainly we ought to examine a work only by those principles according to which it was composed. This would save a deal of impertinent criticism.

V. We have now brought the inquiry as low as was intended, but cannot quit it without entering into a short description of what may be called the œconomy of the ancient English stage.

Such was the fondness of our forefathers for dramatic entertainments, that not fewer than nineteen playhouses had been opened before the year 1633, when Prynne published his *Histriomastix*. [1198] From this writer it should seem that "tobacco, wine, and beer," [1199] were in those days the usual [Pg 453] accommodations in the theatre, as within our memory at Sadler's Wells.

With regard to the players themselves, the several companies were (as hath been already shewn), [1200] retainers or menial servants to particular noblemen, [1201] who protected them in the exercise of their profession: and many of them were occasionally strollers, that travelled from one gentleman's house to another. Yet so much were they encouraged, that, notwithstanding their multitude, some of them acquired large fortunes. Edward Allen, who founded Dulwich College, is a known instance. And an old writer speaks of the very inferior actors, whom he calls the hirelings, as living in a degree

of[Pg 454] splendour which was thought enormous in that frugal age.[1202]

At the same time the ancient prices of admission were often very low. Some houses had penny benches.[1203] The "two-penny gallery" is mentioned in the prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Woman Hater*;[\[1204\]](#) and seats of three-pence and [Pg 455]a groat seem to be intended in the passage of Prynne above referred to. Yet different houses varied in their prices: that playhouse called the "Hope" had seats of five several rates, from sixpence to half-a-crown.[1205] But a shilling seems to have been the usual price[\[1206\]](#) of what is now called the pit, which probably had its name from one of the playhouses having been a cock-pit.[\[1207\]](#)

The day originally set apart for theatrical exhibition appears to have been Sunday, probably because the first dramatic pieces were of a religious cast. During a great part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the playhouses were only licensed to be opened on that day:[\[1208\]](#) but before the end of her reign, or soon after, this abuse was probably removed.

[Pg 456]

The usual time of acting was early in the afternoon,[\[1209\]](#) plays being generally performed by day-light.[\[1210\]](#) All female parts were performed by men, no English actress being ever seen on the public stage[\[1211\]](#) before the civil wars.

[Pg 457]

Lastly, with regard to the playhouse furniture and ornaments, a writer of King Charles II.'s time,[\[1212\]](#) who well remembered the preceding age, assures us that in general "they had no other scenes nor decorations of the stage, but only old tapestry, and the stage strewed with rushes, with habits accordingly."[\[1213\]](#)

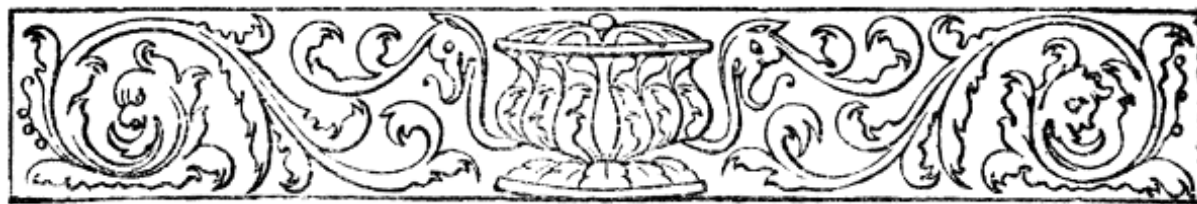
Yet Coryate thought our theatrical exhibitions, &c., splendid when compared with what he saw abroad. Speaking of the Theatre for Comedies at Venice, he says: "The house is very beggarly and base in comparison of our stately playhouses in England, neyther can their actors compare with ours for apparrell, shewes, and musicke. Here I observed certaine things that I never saw before: For I saw women act, a thing that I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath been sometimes used in London; and they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture, and whatsoever convenient for a player, as ever I saw any masculine actor."[\[1214\]](#)

It ought, however, to be observed, that amid such a multitude of playhouses as subsisted in the[Pg 458] metropolis before the Civil Wars, there must have been a great difference between their several accommodations, ornaments, and prices; and that some would be much more shewy than others, though probably all were much inferior in splendor to the two great theatres after the Restoration.

☞ The preceding Essay, although some of the materials are new arranged, hath received no alteration deserving notice, from what it was in the second edition, 1767, except in section IV, which in the present impression hath been much enlarged.

This is mentioned, because, since it was first published, the history of the English stage hath been copiously handled by Mr. Tho. Warton in his *History of English Poetry*, 1774, &c., 3 vols. 4to. (wherein is inserted whatever in these volumes fell in with his subject); and by Edmond Malone, Esq., who, in his *Historical Account of the English Stage* (*Shakesp.* vol. i. part ii. 1790), hath added greatly to our knowledge of the œconomy and usages of our ancient theatres.

[This Essay is now entirely out of date, on account of the mass of new material for a complete history of the English stage, which has been printed since it was written. Information on the subject must be sought in the prefaces of the various editions of the dramatists and of the collections of mysteries and miracle plays, or in Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, and Halliwell's *New Materials for the Life of Shakespeare*.]



INDEX OF BALLADS AND POEMS IN THE FIRST VOLUME.



Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley, [153](#).

Aged Lover renounceth Love, [179](#).

Alcanzor and Zayda, [338](#).

Bryan and Pereene, [328](#).

Carre, Captain, [148](#).

Cauline, Sir, [61](#).

Character of a Happy Life, [317](#).

Chevy Chase, Ancient Ballad of, [19](#).

Chevy Chace, Modern Ballad of, [249](#).

Child of Elle, [131](#).

Cophetua, King, and the Beggar Maid, [189](#).

Corydon's Farewell to Phillis, [209](#).

Cupid's Pastime, [314](#).

Death's Final Conquest, [264](#).

Dowsabell, [304](#).

Edom o' Gordon, [140](#).

Edward, Edward, [82](#).

Estmere, King, [85](#).

Farewell to Love, [310](#).

Friar of Orders Gray, [242](#).

Frolicksome Duke, or the Tinker's Good Fortune, [238](#).

Gentle River, Gentle River, [331](#).

Gernutus, the Jew of Venice, [211](#).

[Pg 460]Gilderoy, [318](#).

Jephthah, Judge of Israel, [182](#).

Jew's Daughter, [54](#).

Lancelot du Lake, Sir, [204](#).

Leir, King, and his Three Daughters, [231](#).

My Mind to me a Kingdom is, [294](#).

Northumberland (Henry, 4th Earl of), Elegy on, [117](#).

Northumberland betrayed by Douglas, [279](#).

Otterbourne, Battle of, [35](#).

Passionate Shepherd to his Love, [220](#).

Patient Countess, [298](#).

Rising in the North, [266](#).

Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne, [102](#).

Robyn, Jolly Robyn, [185](#).

Song to the Lute in Musicke, [187](#).

Spence, Sir Patrick, [98](#).

Take those Lips away, [230](#).

Take thy old Cloak about thee, [195](#).

Titus Andronicus's Complaint, [224](#).

Tower of Doctrine, [127](#).

Ulysses and the Syren, [311](#).

Willow, Willow, Willow, [199](#).

Winifreda, [323](#).

Witch of Wokey, [325](#).

Youth and Age, [237](#).

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST

Transcriber's Notes:

Simple spelling, grammar, and typographical errors were corrected.

Punctuation normalized.

Anachronistic and non-standard spellings retained as printed.

Page vii ERRATA were applied where indicated

Proper drop caps were not possible with poetry as the poem would not wrap properly around the image. The drop cap images were included in the left margin adjacent to where they should have been.

This e-text includes characters that will only display in UTF-8 (Unicode) file encoding, such as:

Εἰκὼν Βασιλική

Ðe.. næƿre noht leaƿunȝa. ne iðeleƿ leoðeƿ ƿýrcean ne mihƿe;

Œ, œ ("oe" ligature)

If any of these characters do not display properly, you may have an incompatible browser or unavailable fonts. First, make sure that the browser's "character set" or "file encoding" is set to Unicode (UTF-8). You may also need to change your browser's default font. The free [JunICODE](#) font works well.

The following Anglo-Saxon Uncial characters have no Unicode equivalent. Ordinary Latin 1 characters were substituted instead.

Uncial	Ɑ	C
	Ɱ	e
	Ɐ	G
	Ɒ	M
	ⱱ	S