

# The Visions of England Lyrics on leading men and events in English History

*Palgrave, Francis Turner, 1824-1897*

Transcribed from the 1889 Cassell and Company edition by David Price, ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

by  
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TANTA RES EST, UT PAENE VITIO MENTIS TANTUM OPUS INGRESSUS MIHI VIDEAR

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## p. 4By the same Author

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\* \* \* \* \*

*To be published presently*

THE TREASURY OF SACRED SONG, selected from the English Lyrical Poetry of Four Centuries, with Notes Explanatory and Biographical

Clarendon Press, Oxford  
Aug. 1889

## p. 5INTRODUCTION.

Again, on behalf of readers of this National Library, I have to thank a poet of our day—in this case the Oxford Professor of Poetry—for joining his voice to the voices of the past through which our better life is quickened for the duties of to-day. Not for his own verse only, but for his fine sense also of what is truest in the poets who have gone before, the name of Francis Turner Palgrave is familiar to us all. Many a home has been made the richer for his gathering of voices of the past into a dainty “Golden Treasury of English Songs.” Of this work of his own I may cite what was said of it in *Macmillan’s Magazine* for October, 1882, by a writer of high authority in English Literature, Professor A. W. Ward, of Owens College. “A very eminent authority,” said Professor Ward, “has accorded to Mr. Palgrave’s historical insight, praise by the side of which all words of mine must be valueless,” Canon [now Bishop] Stubbs writes:—“I do not think that there is one of the *Visions* which does not carry my thorough consent and sympathy all through.”

Here, then, Mr. Palgrave re-issues, for the help of many thousands more, his own songs of the memories of the Nation, addressed to a Nation that has not yet forfeited the praise of Milton. Milton said of the Englishman, “If we look at his native towardliness in the roughcast, without breeding, some nation or p. 6other may haply be better composed to a natural civility and right judgment than he. But if he get the benefit once of a wise and well-rectified nurture, I suppose that wherever mention is made of countries, manners, or men, the English people, among the first that shall be praised, may deserve to be accounted a right pious, right honest, and right hardy nation.” So much is shown by the various utterances in this National Library. So much is shown, in the present volume of it, by a poet’s vision of the England that has been till now, and is what she has been.

H. M.

p. 7to the names of  
HENRY HALLAM and FRANCIS PALGRAVE  
friends and fellow-labourers in english history  
for forty years,  
who, differing often in judgment,  
were at one throughout life in devoted love of  
justice, truth, and england,  
*in affectionate and reverent remembrance*  
this book is inscribed and dedicated

## p. 9PREFACE

As the scheme which the Author has here endeavoured to execute has not, so far as he knows, the advantage of any near precedent in any literature, he hopes that a few explanatory words may be offered without incurring censure for egotism.

Our history is so eminently rich and varied, and at the same time, by the fact of our insular position, so stamped with unity, that from days very remote it has supplied matter for song. This, among Celts and Angles, at first was lyrical. But poetry, for many centuries after the Conquest, mainly took the annalistic form, and, despite the ability often shown, was hence predoomed to failure. For a nation’s history cannot but present many dull or confused periods, many men and things intractable by poetry, though, perhaps, politically effective and important, which cannot be excluded from any narrative aiming at consecutiveness; and, by the natural laws of art, these passages, when rendered in verse, in their effect become more prosaic than they would be in a prose rendering.

My attempt has therefore been to revert to the earlier and more natural conditions of poetry, and to offer,—not a continuous narrative; not poems on every critical moment or conspicuous man in our long annals,—but single lyrical pictures of such leading or typical characters and scenes in English history, and only such, as have seemed amenable to a strictly poetical treatment. Poetry, not History, has, hence, been my first and last aim; or, perhaps I might define it, History for Poetry’s sake. At the same time, I have striven to keep throughout as closely to absolute p. 10historical truth in the design and colouring of the pieces as the exigencies of poetry permit:—the result aimed at being to unite the actual tone and spirit of the time concerned, with the best estimate which has been reached by the research and genius of modern investigators. Our island story, freed from the ‘falsehood of extremes,’—exorcised, above all, from the seducing demon of party-spirit, I have thus here done my best to set forth. And as this line of endeavour has conducted and constrained me, especially when the seventeenth century is concerned, to judgments—supported indeed by historians conspicuous for research, ability, and fairness, but often remote from the views popularized by the writers of our own day,—upon these points a few justificatory notes have been added.

A double aim has hence governed and limited both the selection and the treatment of my subjects. The choice has necessarily fallen, often, not on simply picturesque incident or unfamiliar character, but on the men and things that we think of first, when thinking of the long chronicle of England,—or upon such as represent and symbolize the main current of it. Themes, however, on which able or popular song is already extant,—notably in case of Scotland,—I have in general avoided. In the rendering, my desire has been always to rest the poetry of each Vision on its own intrinsic interest; to write with a straightforward eye to the object alone; not studious of ornament for ornament’s sake; allowing the least possible overt intrusion of the writer’s personality; and, in accordance with lyrical law, seeking, as a rule, to fix upon some factual picture for each poem.

\* \* \* \* \*

To define, thus, the scope of what this book attempts, is, in itself, a confession of presumptuousness,—the writer’s own sense of which is but feebly and imperfectly expressed in the words from Vergil’s letter to Augustus prefixed as my motto. In truth, so rich and so wide are the materials, p. 11that to scheme a lyrical series which should really paint the *Gesta Anglorum* in their fulness might almost argue ‘lack of wit,’ *vitium mentis*, in much greater powers than mine. No criticism, however severe, can add to my own consciousness how far the execution of the work, in regard to each of its aims, falls below the plan. Yet I would allow myself the hope, great as the deficiencies may be, that the love of truth and the love of England are mine by inheritance in a degree sufficient to exempt this book, (the labour of several years), from infidelity to either:—that the intrinsic worth and weight of my subject may commend these songs, both at home, and in the many Englands beyond sea, to those who, (despite the inevitably more engrossing attractions of the Present, and the emphatic bias of modern culture towards the immediate and the tangible), maintain that high and soul-inspiring interest which, identifying us with our magnificent Past, and all its varied lessons of defeat and victory, offers at the same time,—under the guidance from above,—our sole secure guarantee for prosperous and healthy progress in the Future.

The world has cycles in its course, when all  
That once has been, is acted o’er again;

and only the nation which, at each moment of political or social evolution, looks lovingly backward to its own painfully-earned experience—*Respiciens*, *Prospiciens*, as Tennyson’s own chosen device expresses it—has solid reason to hope, that its movement is true Advance—that its course is Upward.

\* \* \* \* \*

It remains only to add, that the book has been carefully revised and corrected, and that nineteen pieces published in the original volume of 1881 are not reprinted in the present issue.

F. T. P.  
*July*, 1889

**p. 15THE VISIONS OF ENGLAND**

**PRELUDE**

*CAESAR TO EGBERT*

1

England, fair England! Empress isle of isles!  
—Round whom the loving-envious ocean plays,  
Girdling thy feet with silver and with smiles,  
Whilst all the nations crowd thy liberal bays;  
With rushing wheel and heart of fire they come,  
Or glide and glance like white-wing’d doves that know  
And seek their proper home:—  
England! not England yet! but fair as now,  
When first the chalky strand was stirr’d by Roman prow.

2

On thy dear countenance, great mother-land,  
Age after age thy sons have set their sign,  
Moulding the features with successive hand  
Not always sedulous of beauty's line:—  
Yet here Man's art in one harmonious aim  
With Nature's gentle moulding, oft has work'd  
    The perfect whole to frame:  
Nor does earth's labour'd face elsewhere, like thee,  
Give back her children's heart with such full sympathy

3

—On marshland rough and self-sprung forest gazed  
The imperial Roman of the eagle-eye;  
Log-splinter'd forts on green hill-summits raised,  
p. 16Earth huts and rings that dot the chalk-downs high:—  
Dark rites of hidden faith in grove and moor;  
Idols of monstrous build; wheel'd scythes of war;  
    Rock tombs and pillars hoar:  
Strange races, Finn, Iberian, Belgae, Celt;  
While in the wolds huge bulls and antler'd giants dwelt.

4

—Another age!—The spell of Rome has past  
Transforming all our Britain; Ruthless plough,  
Which plough'd the world, yet o'er the nations cast  
The seed of arts, and law, and all that now  
Has ripen'd into commonwealths:—Her hand  
With network mile-paths binding plain and hill  
    Arterialized the land:  
The thicket yields: the soil for use is clear;  
Peace with her plastic touch,—field, farm, and grange are here.

5

Lo, flintwall'd cities, castles stark and square  
Bastion'd with rocks that rival Nature's own;  
Red-furnaced baths, trim gardens planted fair  
With tree and flower the North ne'er yet had known;  
Long temple-roofs and statues poised on high  
With golden wings outstretch'd for tiptoe flight,  
    Quivering in summer sky:—  
The land had rest, while those stern legions lay  
By northern ramparts camp'd, and held the Pict at bay.

6

Imperious Empire! Thrice-majestic Rome!  
No later age, as earth's slow centuries glide,  
Can raze the footprints stamp'd where thou hast come,  
The ne'er-repeated grandeur of thy stride!  
—Though now so dense a darkness takes the land,  
Law, peace, wealth, letters, faith,—all lights are quench'd  
    p. 17By violent heathen hand:—  
Vague warrior kings; names writ in fire and wrong;  
Aurelius, Urien, Ida;—shades of ancient song.

7

And Thou—O whether born of flame and wave,  
Or Gorlois' son, or Uther's, blameless lord,  
True knight, who died for those thou couldst not save  
When the Round Table brake their plighted word,—  
The lord of song hath set thee in thy grace  
And glory, rescued from the phantom world,  
    Before us face to face;  
No more Avilion bowers the King detain;  
The mystic child returns; the Arthur reigns again!

8

—Now, as some cloud that hides a mountain bulk  
Thins to white smoke, and mounts in lighten'd air,  
And through the veil the gray enormous hulk  
Burns, and the summit, last, is keen and bare,—  
From wasted Britain so the gloaming clears;  
Another birth of time breaks eager out,  
    And England fair appears:—  
Imperial youth sign'd on her golden brow,  
While the prophetic eyes with hope and promise glow.

9

Then from the wasted places of the land,  
Charr'd skeletons of cities, circling walls  
Of Roman might, and towers that shatter'd stand  
Of that lost world survivors, forth she calls  
Her new creation:—O'er the land is wrought  
The happy villagedom by English tribes  
    From Elbe and Baltic brought;  
Red kine light up with life the ravaged plain;  
The forest glooms are pierced; the plough-land laughs again.

p. 1810

Each from its little croft the homesteads peep,  
Green apple-garths around, and hedgeless meads,  
Smooth-shaven lawns of ever-shifting sheep,  
Wolds where his dappled crew the swineherd feeds:—  
Pale gold round pure pale foreheads, and their eyes  
More dewy blue than speedwell by the brook  
    When Spring's fresh current flies,  
The free fair maids come barefoot to the fount,  
Or poppy-crown'd with fire, the car of harvest mount.

11

On the salt stream that rings us, ness and bay,  
The nation's old sea-soul beats blithe and strong;  
The black foam-breasters taste Biscayan spray,  
And where 'neath Polar dawns the narwhals throng:—  
Free hands, free hearts, for labour and for glee,  
Or village-moot, when thane with churl unites  
    Beneath the sacred tree;  
While wisdom tempers force, and bravery leads,  
Till spears beat Aye! on shields, and words at once are deeds.

12

Again with life the ruin'd cities smile,  
 Again from mother-Rome their sacred fire  
 Knowledge and Faith rekindle through the isle,  
 Nigh quench'd by barbarous war and heathen ire:—  
 —No more on Balder's grave let Anglia weep  
 When winter storms entomb the golden year  
     Sunk in Adonis-sleep;  
 Another God has risen, and not in vain!  
 The Woden-ash is low, the Cross asserts her reign.

13

—Land of the most law-loving,—the most free!  
 My dear, dear England! sweet and green as now  
 p. 19The flower-illuminated garden of the sea,  
 And Nature least impair'd by axe and plough!  
 A laughing land!—Thou seest not in the north  
 How the black Dane and vulture Norseman wait  
     The sign of coming forth,  
 The foul Landeyda flap its raven plume,  
 And all the realms once more eclipsed in pagan gloom!

14

—O race, of many races well compact!  
 As some rich stream that runs in silver down  
 From the White Mount:—his baby steps untrack'd  
 Where clouds and emerald cliffs of crystal frown;  
 Now, alien founts bring tributary flood,  
 Or kindred waters blend their native hue,  
     Some darkening as with blood;  
 These fraught with iron strength and freshening brine,  
 And these with lustral waves, to sweeten and refine.

15

Now calm as strong, and clear as summer air,  
 Blessing and blest of earth and sky, he glides:  
 Now on some rock-ridge rends his bosom fair,  
 And foams with cloudy wrath and hissing tides:  
 Then with full flood of level-gliding force,  
 His discord-blended melody murmurs low  
     Down the long seaward course:—  
 So through Time's mead, great River, greatly glide:  
 Whither, thou may'st not know:—but He, who knows, will guide.

St. 3 Sketches Prehistoric England. St. 4 *Mile-paths*; old English name for Roman roads. St. 5 *Tree and flower*; such are reported to have been naturalized in England by the Romans.—*Northern ramparts*; that of Agricola and Lollius Urbicus from Forth to Clyde, and the greater work of Hadrian and Severus between Tyne and Solway. St. 6, 7 The Arthurian legends,—now revived for us by Tennyson's p. 20 magnificent *Idylls of the King*,—form the visionary links in our history between the decline of the Roman power and the earlier days of the Saxon conquest. St. 9 *Villagedom*; Angles and Saxons seem at first to have burned the larger towns of the Romanized Britons and left them deserted, in favour of village-life. St. 11 *Village-moot*: Held on a little hill or round a sacred tree: 'the ealdermen spoke, groups of freemen stood round, clashing shields in applause, settling matters by loud shouts of *Aye* or *Nay*.' (J. R. Green, *History of the English People*). St. 12 Balder, the God of Light, like Adonis in the old Greek story, is a nature-myth, figuring the Sun, yearly dying in winter, and yearly restored to life. St. 13 *Landeyda*; Name of Danish banner: 'the desolation of the land.'

For further details upon points briefly noticed in this *Prelude*, readers are referred to Mr. J. R. Green's *History*, and to Mr. T. Wright's *The Celt*, *The Roman*, and *The Saxon*, as sources readily accessible.

# THE FIRST AND LAST LAND

## AT SENNEN

Thrice-blest, alone with Nature!—here, where gray  
    Belerium fronts the spray  
Smiting the bastion'd crags through centuries flown,  
    While, 'neath the hissing surge,  
Ocean sends up a deep, deep undertone,

As though his heavy chariot-wheels went round:  
    Nor is there other sound  
Save from the abyss of air, a plaintive note,  
    The seabirds' calling cry,  
As 'gainst the wind with well-poised weight they float,

Or on some white-fringed reef set up their post,  
    And sentinel the coast:—  
Whilst, round each jutting cape, in pillar'd file,  
    The lichen-bearded rocks  
Like hoary giants guard the sacred Isle.

p. 21—Happy, alone with Nature thus!—Yet here  
    Dim, primal man is near;—  
The hawk-eyed eager traders, who of yore  
    Through long Biscayan waves  
Star-steer'd adventurous from the Iberic shore

Or the Sidonian, with their fragrant freight  
    Oil-olive, fig, and date;  
Jars of dark sunburnt wine, flax-woven robes,  
    Or Tyrian azure glass  
Wavy with gold, and agate-banded globes:—

Changing for amber-knobs their Eastern ware  
    Or tin-sand silvery fair,  
To temper brazen swords, or rim the shield  
    Of heroes, arm'd for fight:—  
While the rough miners, wondering, gladly yield

The treasured ore; nor Alexander's name  
    Know, nor fair Helen's shame;  
Or in his tent how Peleus' wrathful son  
    Looks toward the sea, nor heeds  
The towers of still-unconquer'd Ilion.

*Belerium*; The name given to the Land's End by Diodorus, the Greek historical compiler. He describes the natives as hospitable and civilized. They mined tin, which was bought by traders and carried through Gaul to the south-east, and may, as suggested here, have been used in their armour by the warriors during the Homeric Siege of Troy.

## p. 22PAULINUS AND EDWIN

627

The black-hair'd gaunt Paulinus  
    By ruddy Edwin stood:—  
'Bow down, O King of Deira,  
    Before the holy Rood!  
Cast forth thy demon idols,  
    And worship Christ our Lord!'

—But Edwin look'd and ponder'd,  
And answer'd not a word.

Again the gaunt Paulinus  
To ruddy Edwin spake:  
'God offers life immortal  
For His dear Son's own sake!  
Wilt thou not hear his message  
Who bears the Keys and Sword?'  
—But Edwin look'd and ponder'd,  
And answer'd not a word.

Rose then a sage old warrior;  
Was five-score winters old;  
Whose beard from chin to girdle  
Like one long snow-wreath roll'd:—  
'At Yule-time in our chamber  
We sit in warmth and light,  
While cavern-black around us  
Lies the grim mouth of Night.

'Athwart the room a sparrow  
Darts from the open door:  
Within the happy hearth-light  
One red flash,—and no more!  
p. 23We see it born from darkness,  
And into darkness go:—  
So is our life, King Edwin!  
Ah, that it should be so!

'But if this pale Paulinus  
Have somewhat more to tell;  
Some news of whence and whither,  
And where the Soul may dwell:—  
If on that outer darkness  
The sun of Hope may shine;—  
He makes life worth the living!  
I take his God for mine!'

So spake the wise old warrior;  
And all about him cried  
'Paulinus' God hath conquer'd!  
And he shall be our guide:—  
For he makes life worth living,  
Who brings this message plain,—  
When our brief days are over,  
That we shall live again.'

Paulinus was one of the four missionaries sent from Rome by Gregory the Great in 601. The marriage of Edwin, King of Northumbria, with Ethelburga, sister to Eadbald of Kent, opened Paulinus' way to northern England. Bede, born less than fifty years after, has given an admirable narrative of Edwin's conversion: which is very completely told in Bright's *Early English Church History*, B. IV.

Deira, (from old-Welsh *deifr*, waters), then comprised Eastern Yorkshire from Tees to Humber. Goodmanham, where the meeting described was held, is some 23 miles from York.

## **p. 24ALFRED THE GREAT**

849-901



The fair-hair'd boy is at his mother's knee,  
A many-colour'd page before them spread,  
Gay summer harvest-field of gold and red,  
With lines and staves of ancient minstrelsy.  
But through her eyes alone the child can see,  
From her sweet lips partake the words of song,  
And looks as one who feels a hidden wrong,  
Or gazes on some feat of gramarye.  
'When thou canst use it, thine the book!' she cried:  
He blush'd, and clasp'd it to his breast with pride:—  
'Unkingly task!' his comrades cry; In vain;  
All work ennobles nobleness, all art,  
He sees; Head governs hand; and in his heart  
All knowledge for his province he has ta'en.

Few the bright days, and brief the fruitful rest,  
As summer-clouds that o'er the valley flit:—  
To other tasks his genius he must fit;  
The Dane is in the land, uneasy guest!  
—O sacred Athelney, from pagan quest  
Secure, sole haven for the faithful boy  
Waiting God's issue with heroic joy  
And unrelaxing purpose in the breast!  
The Dragon and the Raven, inch by inch,  
For England fight; nor Dane nor Saxon flinch;  
Then Alfred strikes his blow; the realm is free:—  
He, changing at the font his foe to friend,  
Yields for the time, to gain the far-off end,  
By moderation doubling victory.

p. 250 much-vex'd life, for us too short, too dear!  
The laggard body lame behind the soul;  
Pain, that ne'er marr'd the mind's serene control;  
Breathing on earth heaven's aether atmosphere,  
God with thee, and the love that casts out fear!  
A soul in life's salt ocean guarding sure  
The freshness of youth's fountain sweet and pure,  
And to all natural impulse crystal-clear:  
To service or command, to low and high  
Equal at once in magnanimity,  
The Great by right divine thou only art!  
Fair star, that crowns the front of England's morn,  
Royal with Nature's royalty inborn,  
And English to the very heart of heart!

*The fair-hair'd boy:* There is a singular unanimity among historians in regard to this 'darling of the English,' whose life has been vividly sketched by Freeman (*Conquest*, ch. ii); by Green (*English People*, B. I: ch. iii); and, earlier, by my Father in his short *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, ch. vi-viii.

*Changing at the font:* Alfred was godfather to Guthrun the Dane, when baptized after his defeat at Ethandune in 878.

**p. 26A DANISH BARROW**

*ON THE EAST DEVON COAST*

Lie still, old Dane, below thy heap!

—A sturdy-back and sturdy-limb,  
Whoe'er he was, I warrant him  
Upon whose mound the single sheep  
Browses and tinkles in the sun,  
Within the narrow vale alone.

Lie still, old Dane! This restful scene  
Suits well thy centuries of sleep:  
The soft brown roots above thee creep,  
The lotus flaunts his ruddy sheen,  
And,—vain memento of the spot,—  
The turquoise-eyed forget-me-not.

Lie still!—Thy mother-land herself  
Would know thee not again: no more  
The Raven from the northern shore  
Hails the bold crew to push for pelf,  
Through fire and blood and slaughter'd kings,  
'Neath the black terror of his wings.

And thou,—thy very name is lost!  
The peasant only knows that here  
Bold Alfred scoop'd thy flinty bier,  
And pray'd a foeman's prayer, and tost  
His auburn, head, and said 'One more  
Of England's foes guards England's shore,'

And turn'd and pass'd to other feats,  
And left thee in thine iron robe,  
To circle with the circling globe,  
While Time's corrosive dewdrop eats  
p. 27The giant warrior to a crust  
Of earth in earth, and rust in rust.

So lie: and let the children play  
And sit like flowers upon thy grave,  
And crown with flowers,—that hardly have  
A briefer blooming-tide than they;—  
By hurrying years borne on to rest,  
As thou, within the Mother's breast.

## HASTINGS

October 14: 1066

'Gyrth, is it dawn in the sky that I see? or is all the sky blood?  
Heavy and sore was the fight in the North: yet we fought for the good.  
O but—Brother 'gainst brother!—'twas hard!—Now I come with a will  
To baste the false bastard of France, the hide of the tanyard and mill!  
Now on the razor-edge lies  
England the priceless, the prize!  
God aiding, the Raven at Stamford we smote;  
One stroke more for the land here I strike and devote!'

Red with fresh breath on her lips came the dawn; and Harold uprose;  
Kneels as man before God; then takes his long pole-axe, and goes  
Where round their woven wall, tough ash-palisado, they crowd;  
Mightily cleaves and binds, to his comrades crying aloud  
p. 28'Englishmen stalwart and true,  
But one word has Harold for you!

When from the field the false foreigners run,  
Stand firm in your castle, and all will be won!

‘Now, with God o’er us, and Holy Rood, arm!’—And he ran for his spear:  
But Gyrth held him back, ’mong his brothers Gyrth the most honour’d, most dear:  
‘Go not, Harold! thine oath is against thee! the Saints look askance:  
I am not king; let me lead them, me only: mine be the chance!’  
—‘No! The leader must lead!  
Better that Harold should bleed!  
To the souls I appeal, not the dust of the tomb:—  
King chosen of Edward and England, I come!’

Over Heathland surge banners and lances, three armies; William the last,  
Clenching his mace; Rome’s gonfanon round him Rome’s majesty cast:  
O’er his Bretons Fergant, o’er the hireling squadrons Montgomery lords,  
Jerkin’d archers, and mail-clads, and horsemen with pennons and swords:—  
—England, in threefold array,  
Anchor, and hold them at bay,  
Firm set in your own wooden walls! and the wave  
Of high-crested Frenchmen will break on their grave.

So to the palisade on! There, Harold and Leofwine and Gyrth  
Stand like a triple Thor, true brethren in arms as in birth:  
And above the fierce standards strain at their poles as they flare on the gale;  
p. 29One, the old Dragon of Wessex, and one, a Warrior in mail.  
‘God Almighty!’ they cry!  
‘Haro!’ the Northmen reply:—  
As when eagles are gather’d and loud o’er the prey,  
Shout! for ’tis England the prize of the fray!

And as when two lightning-clouds tilt, between them an arrowy sleet  
Hisses and darts; till the challenging thunders are heard, and they meet;  
Across fly javelins and serpents of flame: green earth and blue sky  
Blurr’d in the blind tornado:—so now the battle goes high.  
Shearing through helmet and limb  
Glaive-steel and battle-axe grim:  
As the flash of the reaper in summer’s high wheat,  
King Harold mows horseman and horse at his feet.

O vainly the whirlwind of France up the turf to the palisade swept:  
Shoulder to shoulder the Englishmen stand, and the shield-wall is kept:—  
As, in a summer to be, when England and she yet again  
Strove for the sovranity, firm stood our squares, through the pitiless rain  
Death rain’d o’er them all day;  
—Happier, not braver than they  
Who on Senlac e’en yet their still garrison keep,  
Sleeping a long Marathonian sleep!

‘Madmen, why turn?’ cried the Duke,—for the horsemen recoil from the slope;  
‘Behold me! I live!’—and he lifted the ventayle; ‘before you is hope:  
Death, not safety, behind!’—and he spurs to the centre once more,  
p. 30Lion-like leaps on the standard and Harold: but Gyrth is before!  
‘Down! He is down!’ is the shout:  
‘On with the axes! Out, Out!’  
—He rises again; the mace circles its stroke;  
Then falls as the thunderbolt falls on the oak.

—Gyrth is crush’d, and Leofwine is crush’d; yet the shields hold their wall:  
‘Edith alone of my dear ones is left me, and dearest of all!  
Edith has said she would seek me to-day when the battle is done;

Her love more precious alone than kingdoms and victory won;

O for the sweetness of home!

O for the kindness to come!’

Then around him again the wild war-dragons roar,  
And he drinks the red wine-cup of battle once more.

—‘Anyhow from their rampart to lure them, to shatter the bucklers and wall,  
Acting a flight,’ in his craft thought William, and sign’d to recall  
His left battle:—O countrymen! slow to be roused! roused, always, as then,  
Reckless of life or death, bent only to quit you like men!—

As bolts from the bow-string they go,

Whirl them and hurl them below,

Where the deep foss yawns for the foe in his course,  
Piled up and brimming with horseman and horse.

As when October’s sun, long caught in a curtain of gray,  
With a flood of impatient crimson breaks out, at the dying of day,  
And trees and green fields, the hills and the skies, are all steep’d in the stain;—  
p. 31 So o’er the English one hope flamed forth, one moment,—in vain!

As hail when the corn-fields are deep,

Down the fierce arrow-points sweep:

Now the basnets of France o’er the palisade frown;  
The shield-fort is shatter’d; the Dragon is down.

O then there was dashing and dinting of axe and of broad-sword and spear:  
Blood crying out to blood: and Hatred that casteth out fear!  
Loud where the fight is the loudest, the slaughter-breath hot in the air,  
O what a cry was that!—the cry of a nation’s despair!  
—Hew down the best of the land!

Down them with mace and with brand!

The fell foreign arrow has crash’d to the brain;  
England with Harold the Englishman slain!

Yet they fought on for their England! of ineffaceable fame  
Worthy, and stood to the death, though the greedy sword, like a flame,  
Bit and bit yet again in the solid ranks, and the dead  
Heap where they die, and hills of foemen about them are spread:—  
—Hew down the heart of the land,  
There, to a man, where they stand!  
Till night with her blackness uncrimsons the stain,  
And the merciful shroud overshadows our slain.

Heroes unburied, unwept!—But a wan gray thing in the night  
Like a marsh-wisp flits to and fro through the blood-lake, the steam of the fight;  
Turning the bodies, exploring the features with delicate touch;  
p. 32 Stumbling as one that finds nothing: but now!—as one finding too much:

Love through mid-midnight will see:

Edith the fair! It is he!

Clasp him once more, the heroic, the dear!  
Harold was England: and Harold lies here.

*The hide of the tanyard*; See the story of Arlette or Herleva, the tanner’s daughter, mother to William ‘the Bastard.’

*At Stamford*; At Stamford Bridge, over the Derwent, Harold defeated his brother Tostig and Harold Hardrada, Sep 25, 1066.

*Your castle*; Harold’s triple palisade upon the hill of battle is so described by the chronicler, Henry of Huntingdon.

*Rome’s gonfanon*; The consecrated banner, sent to William from Rome.

*The fierce standards;* These were planted on the spot chosen by the Conqueror for the high-altar of the Abbey of Battle. The *Warrior* was Harold's 'personal ensign.'

*In a summer to be;* June 18, 1815.

*The ventayle;* Used here for the *nasale* or nose-piece shown in the Bayeux Tapestry.

## DEATH IN THE FOREST

August 2: 1100

Where the greenwood is greenest  
At gloaming of day,  
Where the twelve-antler'd stag  
Faces boldest at bay;  
Where the solitude deepens,  
Till almost you hear  
The blood-beat of the heart  
As the quarry slips near;  
His comrades outridden  
With scorn in the race,  
The Red King is hallooing  
His bounds to the chase.

p. 33What though the Wild Hunt  
Like a whirlwind of hell  
Yestereve ran the forest,  
With baying and yell:—  
In his cups the Red heathen  
Mocks God to the face;  
—'In the devil's name, shoot;  
Tyrrell, ho!—to the chase!'

—Now with worms for his courtiers  
He lies in the narrow  
Cold couch of the chancel!  
—But whence was the arrow?

The dread vision of Serlo  
That call'd him to die,  
The weird sacrilege terror  
Of sleep, have gone by.  
The blood of young Richard  
Cries on him in vain,  
In the heart of the Lindwood  
By arbalest slain.  
And he plunges alone  
In the Serpent-glade gloom,  
As one whom the Furies  
Hound headlong to doom.

His sin goes before him,  
The lust and the pride;  
And the curses of England  
Breathe hot at his side.  
And the desecrate walls  
Of the Evil-wood shrine  
Lo, he passes—unheeding  
Dark vision and sign:—

p. 34—Now with worms for his courtiers  
He lies in the narrow  
Cold couch of the chancel:  
—But whence was the arrow?

Then a shudder of death  
Flicker'd fast through the wood:—  
And they found the Red King  
Red-gilt in his blood.  
What wells up in his throat?  
Is it cursing, or prayer?  
Was it Henry, or Tyrrell,  
Or demon, who there  
Has dyed the fell tyrant  
Twice crimson in gore,  
While the soul disincarnate  
Hunts on to hell-door?

—Ah! friendless in death!  
Rude forest-hands fling  
On the charcoaler's wain  
What but now was the king!  
And through the long Minster  
The carcass they bear,  
And huddle it down  
Without priest, without prayer:—

Now with worms for his courtiers  
He lies in the narrow  
Cold couch of the chancel:  
—But whence was the arrow?

*In his cups*; Rufus, it is said, was 'fey,' as the old phrase has it, on the day of his death. He feasted long and high, and then chose out two cross-bow shafts, presenting them to Tyrrell with the exclamation given above.

*Serlo*; He was Abbot of Gloucester, and had sent to Rufus the narrative of an ominous dream, reported in the Monastery.

p. 35*The true dreams*; On his last night Rufus 'laid himself down to sleep, but not in peace; the attendants were startled by the King's voice—a bitter cry—a cry for help—a cry for deliverance—he had been suddenly awakened by a dreadful dream, as of exquisite anguish befalling him in that ruined church, at the foot of the Malwood rampart.' Palgrave: *Hist. of Normandy and of England*, B. IV: ch. xii.

*Young Richard*; Son to Robert Courthose, and hunting, as his uncle's guest, in the New Forest in May 1100, was mysteriously slain by a heavy bolt from a Norman Arbalest.

*The Evil-wood walls*; 'Amongst the sixty churches which had been 'ruined,' my Father remarks, in his notice of the New Forest, 'the sanctuary below the mystic Malwood was peculiarly remarkable. . . . You reach the Malwood easily from the Leafy Lodge in the favourite deer-walk, the Lind-hurst, the Dragon's wood.'

*Through the long Minster*; Winchester. Rufus, with much hesitation, was buried in the chancel as a king; but no religious service or ceremonial was celebrated:—'All men thought that prayers were hopeless.'

## EDITH OF ENGLAND

1100

Through sapling shades of summer green,  
By glade and height and hollow,  
Where Rufus rode the stag to bay,

King Henry spurs a jocund way,  
Another chase to follow.  
But when he came to Romsey gate  
The doors are open'd free,  
And through the gate like sunshine streams  
A maiden company:—  
One girdled with the vervain-red,  
And three in sendal gray,  
And touch the trembling rebeck-strings  
To their soft roundelay;—

—The bravest knight may fail in fight;  
The red rust edge the sword;  
p. 36The king his crown in dust lay down;  
But Love is always Lord!

King Henry at her feet flings down,  
His helmet ringing loudly:—  
His kisses worship Edith's hand;  
'Wilt thou be Queen of all the land?'  
—O red she blush'd and proudly!  
Red as the crimson girdle bound  
Beneath her gracious breast;  
Red as the silken scarf that flames  
Above his lion-crest.  
She lifts and casts the cloister-veil  
All on the cloister-floor:—  
The novice maids of Romsey smile,  
And think of love once more.

'Well, well, to blush!' the Abbess cried,  
'The veil and vow deriding  
That rescued thee, in baby days,  
From insolence of Norman gaze,  
In pure and holy hiding.  
—O royal child of South and North,  
Malcolm and Margaret,  
The promised bride of Heaven art thou,  
And Heaven will not forget!  
What reck's it, if an alien King  
Encoronet thy brow,  
Or if the false Italian priest  
Pretend to loose the vow?'

O then to white the red rose went  
On Edith's cheek abiding!  
With even glance she answer'd meek  
'I leave the life I did not seek,  
In holy Church confiding':—  
Then Love smiled true on Henry's face,  
p. 37And Anselm join'd the hands  
That in one race two races bound  
By everlasting bands.  
So Love is Lord, and Alfred's blood  
Returns the land to sway;  
And all her joyous maidens join  
In their soft roundelay:

—For though the knight may fail in fight,  
The red rust edge the sword,

The king his crown in dust lay down,  
Yet Love is always Lord!

Edith, (who, after marriage, took the name Matilda in compliment to Henry's mother), daughter to Malcolm King of Scotland by Margaret, granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, had been brought up by her aunt Christina, and placed in Romsey Abbey for security against Norman violence. But she had always refused to take the vows, and was hence, in opposition to her aunt's wish, declared canonically free to marry by Anselm; called here an *Italian priest*, as born at Aosta. Henry had been long attached to the Princess, and married her shortly after his accession.

## A CRUSADER'S TOMB

1230

Unnamed, unknown:—his hands across his breast  
Set in sepulchral rest,  
In yon low cave-like niche the warrior lies,  
—A shrine within a shrine,—  
Full of gray peace, while day to darkness dies.

Then the forgotten dead at midnight come  
And throng their chieftain's tomb,  
Murmuring the toils o'er which they toil'd, alive,  
p. 38The feats of sword and love;  
And all the air thrills like a summer hive.

—How so, thou say'st!—This is the poet's right!  
He looks with larger sight  
Than they who hedge their view by present things,  
The small, parochial world  
Of sight and touch: and what he sees, he sings.

The steel-shell'd host, that, gleaming as it turns,  
Like autumn lightning burns,  
A moment's azure, the fresh flags that glance  
As cornflowers o'er the corn,  
Till war's stern step show like a gala dance,

He also sees; and pierces to the heart,  
Scanning the genuine part  
Each Red-Cross pilgrim plays: Some, gold-enticed;  
By love or lust or fame  
Urged; or who yearn to kiss the grave of Christ

And find their own, life-wearied:—Motley band!  
O! ere they quit the Land  
How maim'd, how marr'd, how changed from all that pride  
In which so late they left  
Orwell or Thames, with sails out-swelling wide

And music tuneable with the timing oar  
Clear heard from shore to shore;  
All Europe streaming to the mystic East!  
—Now on their sun-smit ranks  
The dusky squadrons close in vulture-feast,

And that fierce Day-star's blazing ball their sight  
Sears with excess of light;  
Or through dun sand-clouds the blue scimitar's edge  
Slopes down like fire from heaven,  
Mowing them as the thatcher mows the sedge.



p. 39 Then many a heart remember'd, as the skies  
Grew dark on dying eyes,  
Sweet England; her fresh fields and gardens trim;  
Her tree-embower'd halls;  
And the one face that was the world to him.

—And one who fought his fight and held his way,  
Through life's long latter day  
Moving among the green, green English meads,  
Ere in this niche he took  
His rest, oft 'mid his kinsfolk told the deeds

Of that gay passage through the Midland sea;  
Cyprus and Sicily;  
And how the Lion-Heart o'er the Moslem host  
Triumph'd in Ascalon  
Or Acre, by the tideless Tyrian coast,

Yet never saw the vast Imperial dome,  
Nor the thrice-holy Tomb:—  
—As that great vision of the hidden Grail  
By bravest knights of old  
Unseen:—seen only of pure Parcivale.

The 'Thud Crusade,' 1189-1193, is the subject of this poem. Richard Coeur de Lion carried his followers by way of Sicily and Cyprus: making a transient conquest of the latter. In the Holy Land the siege of Acre consumed the time and strength of the Crusaders. They suffered terribly in the wilderness of Mount Carmel, and when at last preparing to march on Jerusalem (1192) were recalled to Ascalon. Richard now advanced to Bethany, but was unable to reach the Holy City. The tale is that while riding with a party of knights one of them called out, 'This way, my lord, and you will see Jerusalem.' But Richard hid his face and said, 'Alas!—they who are not worthy to win the Holy City are not worthy to behold it.'

*The vast Imperial dome*; The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built by the Emperor Constantine; a.d. 326-335.

*The hidden Grail*; This vision forms the subject of one of Tennyson's noblest *Idylls*.

## **p. 40A BALLAD OF EVESHAM**

August 4: 1265

Earl Simon on the Abbey tower  
In summer sunshine stood,  
While helm and lance o'er Greenhill heights  
Come glinting through the wood.  
'My son!' he cried, 'I know his flag  
Amongst a thousand glancing':—  
Fond father! no!—'tis Edward stern  
In royal strength advancing.

The Prince fell on him like a hawk  
At Al'ster yester-eve,  
And flaunts his captured banner now  
And flaunts but to deceive:—  
—Look round! for Mortimer is by,  
And guards the rearward river:—  
The hour that parted sire and son  
Has parted them for ever!

'Young Simon's dead,' he thinks, and look'd  
Upon his living son:

Now God have mercy on our souls,  
Our bodies are undone!  
But, Hugh and Henry, ye can fly  
Before their bowmen smite us—  
They come on well! But 'tis from me  
They learn'd the skill to fight us.'

—'For England's cause, and England's laws,  
With you we fight and fall!'  
—'Together, then, and die like men,  
And Heaven has room for all!'  
—Then, face to face, and limb to limb,  
p. 41And sword with sword inwoven,  
That stubborn courage of the race  
On Evesham field was proven

O happy hills! O summer sky  
Above the valley bent!  
Your peacefulness rebukes the rage  
Of blood on blood intent!  
No thought was then for death or life  
Through that long dreadful hour,  
While Simon 'mid his faithful few  
Stood like an iron tower,

'Gainst which the winds and waves are hurl'd  
In vain, unmoved, foursquare;  
And round him raged the insatiate swords  
Of Edward and De Clare:  
And round him in the narrow combe  
His white-cross comrades rally,  
While ghastly gashings, cloud the beck  
And crimson all the valley,

And triple sword-thrusts meet his sword,  
And thrice the charge he foils,  
Though now in threefold flood the foe  
Round those devoted boils:  
And still the light of England's cause  
And England's love was o'er him,  
Until he saw his gallant boy  
Go down in blood before him:—

He hove his huge two-handed blade,  
He cried "'Tis time to die!'  
And smote around him like a flail,  
And clear'd a space to lie:—  
'Thank God!'—no more;—nor now could life  
From loved and lost divide him:—  
p. 42And night fell o'er De Montfort dead,  
And England wept beside him.

In the words given here to Simon (and, indeed, in the bulk of my narrative) I have almost literally followed Prothero's *Life*. The struggle, like other critical conflicts in the days of unprofessional war, was very brief.

## THE DIRGE OF LLYWELYN

December 10: 1282

Llanyis on Irfon, thine oaks in the drear

Red eve of December are wind-swept and sere,  
Where a king by the stream in his agony lies,  
And the life of a land ebbs away as he dies.

Carádoc, thy sceptre for centuries kept,  
Shall it pass like the ripple, unhonour'd, unwept:  
Unknowing the lance, and the victim unknown,  
Far from Aberffraw's halls and Erýri the lone!

O dark day of winter and Cambria's shame,  
To the treason of Builth when from Gwynedd he came,  
And Walwyn and Frankton and Mortimer fell  
Closed round unawares by the fold in the dell!

—As who, where the shadow beneath him is thrown,  
By some well in Saharan high noontide alone  
Sits under the palm-tree, nor hears the low breath  
Of the russet-maned foe panting hot for his death;

So Llywelyn,—unarm'd, unaware:—Is it she,  
Bright star of his morning, when Gwynedd was free,  
Fair bride, the long sought, taken early, goes by?  
In the heart of the breeze the lost Eleanor's sigh?

p. 43 Or the one little daughter's sweet face with a gleam  
Of glamour looks out, as the dream in a dream?  
Or for childhood's first sunshine and calm does he yearn,  
As the days of Maesmynan in memory return?

Or,—dear to the heart's-blood as first-love or wife,—  
The mountains whose freedom was one with his life,  
Gray farms and green vales of that ancient domain,  
The thousand-years' kingdom, he dreams of again?

Or is it the rage of stark Edward; the base  
Unkingly revenge on a kinglier race;  
The wrong idly wrought on the patriot dead;  
The dark castle of doom; the scorn-diadem'd head?

—Lo, where Rhodri and Owain await thee!—The foe  
Slips nearing in silence: one flash—and one blow!  
And the ripple that passes wafts down to the Wye  
The last prayer of Llywelyn, the nation's last sigh.

But Llanynis yet sees the white rivulet gleam,  
And the leaf of December fall sere on the stream;  
While Irfon his dirge whispers on through the combe,  
And the purple-topt hills gather round in their gloom.

*Where a king;* The war in which Llywelyn fell was the inevitable result of the growing power of England under Edward I; and, considering the vast preponderance of weight against the Welsh Prince it could not have ended but in the conquest of Wales. Yet its issue, as told here, was determined as if by chance.

*Aberffraw;* in Anglesea: the residence of the royal line of Gwynedd from the time of Rhodri Mawr onwards.

*Eryri;* the Eagle's rock is a name for Snowdon. The bird has been seen in the neighbourhood within late years.

*Is it she;* Eleanor, daughter to Simon de Montfort. After some years of betrothal and impediment arising from the jealousy of Edward I, she and Llywelyn were married in 1278. But after only two years of happiness, Eleanor died, leaving one child, Catharine or Gwenllian.

p. 44*Maesmynan*; by Caerwys in Flintshire; where Llywelyn lived retiredly in youth.

*The thousand-years' kingdom*; The descent of the royal house of North Wales is legendarily traced from Caradoc-  
Caractacus. But the accepted genealogy of the Princes of Gwynedd begins with Cunedda Wledig (Paramount) cir. 400:  
ending in 1282 with Llywelyn son of Gruffydd.

*The scorn-diadem'd head*; On finding whom he had slain, Frankton carried Llywelyn's head to Edward at Rhuddlan,  
who, with a barbarity unworthy of himself, set it over the Tower of London, wreathed in mockery of a prediction  
(ascribed to Merlin) upon the coronation of a Welsh Prince in London.

*Rhodri and Owain*; Rhodri Mawr, (843), who united under his supremacy the other Welsh principalities, Powys and  
Dinefawr; Owain Gwynedd, (1137),—are among the most conspicuous of Llywelyn's royal predecessors.

## THE REJOICING OF THE LAND

1295

So the land had rest! and the cloud of that heart-sore struggle and pain  
Rose from her ancient hills, and peace shone o'er her again,  
Sunlike chasing the plagues wherewith the land was defiled;  
And the leprosy fled, and her flesh came again, as the flesh of a child.  
—They were stern and stark, the three children of Rolf, the first from Anjou:  
For their own sake loving the land, mayhap, but loving her true;  
France the wife, and England the handmaid; yet over the realm  
Their eyes were in every place, their hands gripp'd firm on the helm.  
Villein and earl, the cowl and the plume, they were bridled alike;  
One law for all, but arm'd law,—not swifter to aid than to strike.  
p. 45Lo, in the twilight transept, the holy places of God,  
Not with sunset the steps of the altar are dyed, but with scarlet of blood!  
Clang of iron-shod feet, and sheep for their shepherd who cry;  
Curses and swords that flash, and the victim proffer'd to die!  
—Bare thy own back to the smiter, O king, at the shrine of the dead:  
Thy friend thou hast slain in thy folly; the blood of the Saint on thy head:  
Proud and priestly, thou say'st;—yet tender and faithful and pure;  
True man, and so, true saint;—the crown of his martyrdom sure:—  
As friend with his friend, he could brave thee and warn; thou hast silenced the voice,  
Ne'er to be heard again:—nor again will Henry rejoice!  
Green Erin may yield her, fair Scotland submit; but his sunshine is o'er;  
The tooth of the serpent, the child of his bosom, has smote him so sore:—  
Like a wolf from the hounds he dragg'd off to his lair, not turning to bay:—  
Crying 'shame on a conquer'd king!'—the grim ghost fled sullen away.  
—Then, as in gray Autumn the heavens are pour'd on the rifted hillside,  
When the Rain-stars mistily gleam, and torrents leap white in their pride,  
And the valley is all one lake, and the late, unharvested shocks  
Are rapt to the sea, the dwellings of man, the red kine and the flocks,—  
O'er England the ramparts of law, the old landmarks of liberty fell,  
As the brothers in blood and in lust, twin horror begotten of hell,  
p. 46Suck'd all the life of the land to themselves, like Lofoden in flood,  
One in his pride, in his subtlety one, mocking England and God.  
Then tyranny's draught—once only—we drank to the dregs!—and the stain  
Went crimson and black through the soul of the land, for all time, not in vain!  
We bore the bluff many-wived king, rough rival and victor of Rome;  
We bore the stern despot-protector, whose dawning and sunset were gloom;  
For they temper'd the self of the tyrant with love of the land,  
Some touch of the heart, some remorse, refraining the grip of the hand.  
But John's was blackness of darkness, a day of vileness and shame;  
Shrieks of the tortured, and silence, and outrage the mouth cannot name.  
—O that cry of the helpless, the weak that writhe under the foe,  
Wrong man-wrought upon man, dumb unwritten annals of woe!

Cry that goes upward from earth as she rolls through the peace of the skies  
 ‘How long? Hast thou forgotten, O God!’ . . . and silence replies!  
 Silence:—and then was the answer;—the light o’er Windsor that broke,  
 The Meadow of Law—true Avalon where the true Arthur awoke!  
 —Not thou, whose name, as a seed o’er the world, plume-wafted on air,  
 Britons on each side sea,—Caerlleon and Cumbria,—share,  
 Joy of a downtrod race, dear hope of freedom to-be,  
 p. 47 Dream of poetic hearts, whom the vision only can see! . . .  
 For thine were the fairy knights, fair ideals of beauty and song;  
 But ours, in the ways of men, walk’d sober, and stumbling, and strong;—  
 Stumbling as who in peril and twilight their pathway trace out,  
 Hard to trace, and untried, and the foe above and about;  
 For the Charter of Freedom, the voice of the land in her Council secure  
 All doing, all daring,—and, e’en when defeated, of victory sure!  
 Langton, our Galahad, first, stamp’d Leader by Rome unaware,  
 Pembroke and Mowbray, Fitzwarine, Fitzalan, Fitzwalter, De Clare:—  
 —O fair temple of Freedom and Law!—the foundations ye laid:—  
 But again came the storm, and the might of darkness and wrong was array’d,  
 A warfare of years; and the battle raged, and new heroes arose  
 From a soil that is fertile in manhood’s men, and scatter’d the foes,  
 And set in their place the bright pillars of Order, Liberty’s shrine,  
 O’er the land far-seen, as o’er Athens the home of Athena divine.  
 —So the land had rest:—and the cloud of that heart-sore struggle and pain  
 Sped from her ancient hills, and peace shone o’er her again,  
 Sunlike chasing the plagues wherewith the land was defiled:  
 And the leprosy fled, and her flesh came again, as the flesh of a child.  
 For lo! the crown’d Statesman of Law, Justinian himself of his realm,  
 p. 48 Edward, since Alfred our wisest of all who have watch’d by the helm!  
 He who yet preaches in silence his life-word, the light of his way,  
 From his marble unadorn’d chest, in the heart of the West Minster gray,  
*Keep thy Faith* . . . In the great town-twilight, this city of gloom,  
 —O how unlike that blithe London he look’d on!—I look on his tomb,  
 In the circle of kings, round the shrine, where the air is heavy with fame,  
 Dust of our moulder’d chieftains, and splendour shrunk to a name.  
 Silent synod august, ye that tried the delight and the pain,  
 Trials and snares of a throne, was the legend written in vain?  
 Speak, for ye know, crown’d shadows! who down each narrow and strait  
 As ye might, once guided,—a perilous passage,—the keel of the State,  
 Fourth Henry, fourth Edward, Elizabeth, Charles,—now ye rest from your toil,  
 Was it best, when by truth and compass ye steer’d, or by statecraft and guile?  
 Or is it so hard, that steering of States, that as men who throw in  
 With party their life, honour soils his own ermine, a lie is no sin? . . .  
 —Not so, great Edward, with thee,—not so!—For he learn’d in his youth  
 The step straightforward and sure, the proud, bright bearing of truth:—  
 Arm’d against Simon at Evesham, yet not less, striking for Law,—  
 Ages of temperate freedom, a vision of order, he saw!—  
 —Vision of opulent years, a murmur of welfare and peace:  
 p. 49 Orchard golden-globed, plain waving in golden increase;  
 Hopfields fairer than vineyards, green laughing tendrils and bine;  
 Woodland misty in sunlight, and meadow sunny with kine;—  
 Havens of heaving blue, where the keels of Guienne and the Hanse  
 Jostle and creak by the quay, and the mast goes up like a lance,  
 Gay with the pennons of peace, and, blazon’d with Adria’s dyes,  
 Purple and orange, the sails like a sunset burn in the skies.  
 Bloodless conquests of commerce, that nation with nation unite!  
 Hand clasp’d frankly in hand, not steel-clad buffets in fight:  
 On the deck strange accents and shouting; rough furcowl’d men of the north,  
 Genoa’s brown-neck’d sons, and whom swarthy Smyrna sends forth:  
 Freights of the south; drugs potent o’er death from the basilisk won,

Odorous Phoenix-nest, and spice of a sunnier sun:—  
 Butts of Malvasian nectar, Messene's vintage of old,  
 Cyprian webs, damask of Arabia mazy with gold:  
 Sendal and Samite and Tarsien, and sardstones ruddy as wine,  
 Graved by Athenian diamond with forms of beauty divine.  
 To the quay from the gabled alleys, the huddled ravines of the town,  
 Twilights of jutting lattice and beam, the Guild-merchants come down,  
 Cheapening the gifts of the south, the sea-borne alien bales,  
 For the snow-bright fleeces of Leom'ster, the wealth of Devonian vales;  
 p. 50 While above them, the cavernous gates, on which knight-robbers have gazed  
 Hopeless, in peace look down, their harrows of iron upraised;  
 And Dustyfoot enters at will with his gay Autolycus load,  
 And the maidens are flocking as doves when they fling the light grain on the road.  
 Low on the riverain mead, where the dull clay-cottages cling  
 To the tall town-ward and the towers, as nests of the martin in spring,  
 Where the year-long fever lurks, and gray leprosy burrows secure,  
 Are the wattled huts of the Friars, the long, white Church of the poor:  
 —Haven of wearied eyelids; of hearts that care not to live;  
 Shadow and silence of prayer; the peace which the world cannot give!  
 Tapers hazily gloaming through fragrance the censers outpour;  
 Chant ever rising and rippling in sweetness, as waves on the shore;  
 Casements of woven stone, with more than the rainbow bedyed;  
 Beauty of holiness! Spell yet unbroken by riches and pride!  
 —Ah! could it be so for ever!—the good aye better'd by Time:—  
 First-Faith, first-Wisdom, first-Love,—to the end be true to their prime! . .  
 Far rises the storm o'er horizons unseen, that will lay them in dust,  
 Crashings of plunder'd cloisters, and royal insatiate lust:—  
 Far, unseen, unheard!—Meanwhile the great Minster on high  
 Like a stream of music, aspiring, harmonious, springs to the sky:—  
 Story on story ascending their buttress'd beauty unfold,  
 p. 51 Till the highest height is attain'd, and the Cross shines star-like in gold,  
 Set as a meteor in heaven; a sign of health and release:—  
 And the land rejoices below, and the heart-song of England is Peace.

This date has been chosen as representing at once the culminating point in the reign of Edward, and of Mediaevalism in England. The sound, the fascinating elements of that period rapidly decline after the thirteenth century in Church and State, in art and in learning.

'In the person of the great Edward,' says Freeman, 'the work of reconciliation is completed. Norman and Englishman have become one under the best and greatest of our later Kings, the first who, since the Norman entered our land, . . . followed a purely English policy.'

*The three children*; William I and II, and Henry I.

*The transept*; of Canterbury Cathedral, after Becket's death named the 'Martyrdom.'

*Nor again*; See the *Early Plantagenets*, by Bishop Stubbs: one of the very few masterpieces among the shoal of little books on great subjects in which a declining literature is fertile.

*Britons on each side sea*; Armorica and Cornwall, Wales and Strathclyde, all share in the great Arthurian legend.

*Justinian*; 'Edward,' says Dr. Stubbs, 'is the great lawgiver, the great politician, the great organiser of the mediaeval English polity:' (*Early Plantagenets*).

*Keep thy Faith*; 'Pactum serva' may be still seen inscribed on the huge stone coffin of Edward I.

*The keels of Guienne . . . Adria's dyes*; The ships of Gascony, of the Hanse Towns, of Genoa, of Venice, are enumerated amongst those which now traded with England.

*Malvasian nectar*; 'Malvoisie,' the sweet wine of the Southern Morea, gained its name from Monemvasia, or Napoli di

Malvasia, its port of shipment.

*Sendal*; A thin rich silk. *Samite*; A very rich stuff, sometimes wholly of silk, often crimson, interwoven with gold and silver thread, and embroidered. *Tarsien*; Silken stuff from Tartary.

*Athenian diamond*; A few very fine early gems ascribed to Athens, are executed wholly with diamond-point.

*The snow-bright fleeces*; Those of Leominster were very long famous.

*Devonian vales*; The ancient mining region west of Tavistock.

*Dustyfoot*; Old name for pedlar.

## p. 52CRECY

August 26: 1346

At Crecy by Somme in Ponthieu  
High up on a windy hill  
A mill stands out like a tower;  
King Edward stands on the mill.  
The plain is seething below  
As Vesuvius seethes with flame,  
But O! not with fire, but gore,  
Earth incarnadined o'er,  
Crimson with shame and with fame!—  
To the King run the messengers, crying  
'Thy Son is hard-press'd to the dying!'  
—'Let alone: for to-day will be written in story  
To the great world's end, and for ever:  
So let the boy have the glory.'

Erin and Gwalia there  
With England are one against France;  
Outfacing the oriflamme red  
The red dragons of Merlin advance:—  
As harvest in autumn renew'd  
The lances bend o'er the fields;  
Snow-thick our arrow-heads white  
Level the foe as they light;  
Knighthood to yeomanry yields:—  
Proud heart, the King watches, as higher  
Goes the blaze of the battle, and nigher:—  
'To-day is a day will be written in story  
To the great world's end, and for ever!  
Let the boy alone have the glory.'

Harold at Senlac-on-Sea  
By Norman arrow laid low,—  
p. 53When the shield-wall was breach'd by the shaft,  
—Thou art avenged by the bow!  
Chivalry! name of romance!  
Thou art henceforth but a name!  
Weapon that none can withstand,  
Yew in the Englishman's hand,  
Flight-shaft unerring in aim!  
As a lightning-struck forest the foemen  
Shiver down to the stroke of the bowmen:—  
—'O to-day is a day will be written in story  
To the great world's end, and for ever!

So, let the boy have the glory.'

Pride of Liguria's shore  
Genoa wrestles in vain;  
Vainly Bohemia's King  
Kinglike is laid with the slain.  
The Blood-lake is wiped-out in blood,  
The shame of the centuries o'er;  
Where the pride of the Norman had sway  
The lions lord over the fray,  
The legions of France are no more:—  
—The Prince to his father kneels lowly;  
—'His is the battle! his wholly!  
For to-day is a day will be written in story  
To the great world's end, and for ever:—  
So, let him have the spurs, and the glory!'

*Erin and Gwalia*; Half of Edward's army consisted of light armed footmen from Ireland and Wales—the latter under their old Dragon-flag.

*Chivalry*; The feudal idea of an army, resting 'on the superiority of the horseman to the footman, of the mounted noble to the unmounted churl,' may be said to have been ruined by this battle: (*Green*, B. IV: ch. iii).

*Liguria*; 15,000 cross-bowmen from Genoa were in Philip's army.

*The Blood-lake*; Senlac; Hastings.

## **p. 54THE BLACK SEATS**

1348-9

Blue and ever more blue  
The sky of that summer's spring:  
No cloud from dawning to night:  
The lidless eyeball of light  
Glared: nor could e'en in darkness the dew  
Her pearls on the meadow-grass string.  
As a face of a hundred years,  
Mummied and scarr'd, for the heart  
Is long dry at the fountain of tears,  
Green earth lay brown-faced and torn,  
Scarr'd and hard and forlorn.  
And as that foul monster of Lerna  
Whom Héraclés slew in his might,  
But this one slaying, not slain,  
From the marshes, poisonous, white,  
Crawl'd out a plague-mist and sheeted the plain,  
A hydra of hell and of night.  
—Whence upon men has that horror past?  
From Cathaya westward it stole to Byzance,—  
The City of Flowers,—the vineyards of France;—  
O'er the salt-sea ramparts of England, last,  
Reeking and rank, a serpent's breath:—  
What is this, men cry in their fear, what is this that cometh?  
'Tis the Black Death, they whisper:  
The black black Death!

The heart of man at the name  
To a ball of ice shrinks in,  
With hope, surrendering life:—



The husband looks on the wife,  
Reading the tokens of doom in the frame,  
The pest-boil hid in the skin,  
p. 55And flees and leaves her to die.  
Fear-sick, the mother beholds  
In her child's pure crystalline eye  
A dull shining, a sign of despair.  
Lo, the heavens are poison, not air;  
And they fall as when lambs in the pasture  
With a moan that is hardly a moan,  
Drop, whole flocks, where they stand;  
And the mother lays her, alone,  
Slain by the touch of her nursing hand,  
Where the household before her is strown.  
—Earth, Earth, open and cover thy dead!  
For they are smitten and fall who bear  
The corpse to the grave with a prayerless prayer,  
And thousands are crush'd in the common bed:—  
—Is it Hell that breathes with an adder's breath?  
Is it the day of doom, men cry, the Judge that cometh?  
—'Tis the Black Death, God help us!  
The black black Death.

Maid Alice and maid Margaret  
In the fields have built them a bower  
Of reedmace and rushes fine,  
Fenced with sharp albespyne;  
Pretty maids hid in the nest; and yet  
Yours is one death, and one hour!  
Priest and peasant and lord  
By the swift, soft stroke of the air,  
By a silent invisible sword,  
In plough-field or banquet, fall:  
The watchers are flat on the wall:—  
Through city and village and valley  
The sweet-voiced herald of prayer  
Is dumb in the towers; the throng  
To the shrine pace barefoot; and where  
Blazed out from the choir a glory of song,  
p. 56God's altar is lightless and bare.  
Is there no pity in earth or sky?  
The burden of England, who shall say?  
Half the giant oak is riven away,  
And the green leaves yearn for the leaves that die.  
Will the whole world drink of the dragon's breath?  
It is the cup, men cry, the cup of God's fury that cometh!  
'Tis the Black Death, Lord help us!  
The black black Death.

In England is heard a moan,  
A bitter lament and a sore,  
Rachel lamenting her dead,  
And will not be comforted  
For the little faces for ever gone,  
The feet from the silent floor.  
And a cry goes up from the land,  
Take from us in mercy, O God,  
Take from us the weight of Thy hand,  
The cup and the wormwood of woe!

'Neath the terrible barbs of Thy bow  
 This England, this once Thy beloved,  
 Is water'd with life-blood for rain;  
 The bones of her children are white,  
 As flints on the Golgotha plain;  
 Not slain as warriors by warriors in fight,  
 By the arrows of Heaven slain.  
 We have sinn'd: we lift up our souls to Thee,  
 O Lord God eternal on high:  
 Thou who gavest Thyself to die,  
 Saviour, save! to Thy feet we flee:—  
 Snatch from the hell and the Enemy's breath,  
 From the Prince of the Air, from the terror by night that cometh:—  
 From the Black Death, Christ save us!  
 The black black Death!

p. 57*That foul monster*; The Lernaean Hydra of Greek legend.

*From the marshes*; The drought which preceded the plague in England, and may have predisposed to its reception, was followed by mist, in which the people fancied they saw the disease palpably advancing.

*From Cathaya*; The plague was heard of in Central Asia in 1333; it reached Constantinople in 1347.

*The City of Flowers*; Florence, where the ravages of the plague were immortalized in the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio.

*The pest boil*; Seems to have been the enlarged and discharging gland by which the specific blood-poison of the plague relieved itself. A 'muddy glistening' of the eye is noticed as one of the symptoms.

*The common bed*; More than 50,000 are said to have been buried on the site of the Charter House.

*Albespyne*; Hawthorn.

*Half the giant oak*; 'Of the three or four millions who then formed the population of England, more than one-half were swept away': (*Green*, B. IV: ch. iii).

## THE PILGRIM AND THE PLOUGHMAN

1382

It is a dream, I know:—Yet on the past  
 Of this dear England if in thought we gaze,  
 About her seems a constant sunshine cast;  
 In summer calm we see and golden haze  
 The little London of Plantagenet days;  
 Quaint labyrinthine knot of toppling lanes,  
 And thorny spires aflame with starlike vanes.

Our silver Thames all yet unspoil'd and clear;  
 The many-buttress'd bridge that stems the tide;  
 Black-timber'd wharves; arcaded walls, that rear  
 Long, golden-crested roofs of civic pride:—  
 While flaunting galliots by the gardens glide,  
 And on Spring's frolic air the May-song swells,  
 Mix'd with the music of a thousand bells.

p. 58Beyond the bridge a mazy forest swims,  
 Great spars and sails and flame-tongued flags on high,  
 Wedged round the quay, a-throng with ruddy limbs  
 And faces bronzed beneath another sky:  
 And 'mid the press sits one with aspect shy

And downcast eyes of watching, and, the while,  
The deep observance of an inward smile.

In hooded mantle gray he smiled and sate,  
With ink-horn at his knees and scroll and pen.  
And took the toll and register'd the freight,  
'Mid noise of clattering cranes and strife of men:  
And all that moved and spoke was in his ken,  
With lines and hues like Nature's own design'd  
Deep in the magic mirror of his mind.

Thence oft, returning homeward, on the book,—  
His of Certaldo, or the bard whose lays  
Were lost to love in Scythia,—he would look  
Till his fix'd eyes the dancing letters daze:  
Then forth to the near fields, and feed his gaze  
On one fair flower in starry myriads spread,  
And in her graciousness be comforted:—

Then, joyous with a poet's joy, to draw  
With genial touch, and strokes of patient skill,  
The very image of each thing he saw:—  
He limn'd the man all round, for good or ill,  
Having both sighs and laughter at his will;  
Life as it went he grasp'd in vision true,  
Yet stood outside the scene his pencil drew.

—Man's inner passions in their conscience-strife,  
The conflicts of the heart against the heart,  
The mother yearning o'er the infant's life,  
The maiden wrong'd by wealth and lecherous art,  
The leper's loathsome cell from man apart,  
p. 59 War's hell of lust and fire, the village-woe,  
The tinsel chivalry veiling shame below,—

Not his to draw,—to see, perhaps:—Our eyes  
Hold bias with our humour:—His, to paint  
With Nature's freshness, what before him lies:  
The knave, the fool; the frolicsome, the quaint:  
His the broad jest, the laugh without restraint,  
The ready tears, the spirit lightly moved;  
Loving the world, and by the world beloved.

So forth fared Chaucer on his pilgrimage  
Through England's humours; in immortal song  
Bodying the form and pressure of his age,  
Tints gay as pure, and delicate as strong;  
Still to the Tabard the blithe travellers throng,  
Seen in his mind so vividly, that we  
Know them more clearly than the men we see.

Fair France, bright Italy, those numbers train'd;  
First in his pages Nature wedding Art  
Of all our sons of song; yet he remain'd  
True English of the English at his heart:—  
He stood between two worlds, yet had no part  
In that new order of the dawning day  
Which swept the masque of chivalry away.

O Poet of romance and courtly glee

And downcast eager glance that shuns the sky,  
Above, about, are signs thou canst not see,  
Portents in heaven and earth!—And one goes by  
With other than thy prosperous, laughing eye,  
Framing the rough web of his rueful lays,  
The sorrow and the sin—with bitter gaze

As down the Strand he stalks, a sable shade  
Of death, while, jingling like the elfin train,  
p. 60In silver samite knight and dame and maid  
Ride to the tourney on the barrier'd plain;  
And he must bow in humble mute disdain,  
And that worst woe of baffled souls endure,  
To see the evil that they may not cure.

For on sweet Malvern Hill one morn he lay,  
Drownsed by the music of the constant stream:—  
Loud sang the cuckoo, cuckoo!—for the May  
Breathed summer: summer floating like a dream  
From the far fields of childhood, with a gleam  
Of alien freshness on her forehead fair,  
And Heaven itself within the common air.

Then on the mead in vision Langland saw  
A pilgrim-throng; not missal-bright as those  
Whom Chaucer's hand surpass'd itself to draw,  
Gay as the lark, and brilliant as the rose;—  
But such as dungeon foul or spital shows,  
Or the serf's fever-den, or field of fight,  
When festering sunbeams on the wounded smite.

No sainted shrine the motley wanderers seek,  
Pilgrims of life upon the field of scorn,  
Mocking and mock'd; with plague and hunger weak,  
And haggard faces bleach'd as those who mourn,  
And footsteps redden'd with the trodden thorn;  
Blind stretching hands that grope for truth in vain,  
Across a twilight demon-haunted plain.

A land whose children toil and rot like beasts,  
Robbers and robb'd by turns, the dreamer sees:—  
Land of poor-grinding lords and faithless priests,  
Where wisdom starves and folly thrones at ease  
'Mid lavishness and lusts and knaveries;  
Times out of joint, a universe of lies,  
Till Love divine appear in Ploughman's guise

p. 61To burn the gilded tares and save the land,  
Risen from the grave and walking earth again:—  
—And as he dream'd and kiss'd the nail-pierced hand,  
A hundred towers their Easter voices rain  
In silver showers o'er hill and vale and plain,  
And the air throbb'd with sweetness, and he woke  
And all the dream in light and music broke.

—He look'd around, and saw the world he left  
When to that visionary realm of song  
His spirit fled from bonds of flesh bereft;  
And on the vision he lay musing long,  
As o'er his soul rude minstrel-echoes throng,

Old measures half-disused; and grasp'd his pen,  
And drew his cottage-Christ for homely men.

Thus Langland also took his pilgrimage;  
Rough lone knight-errant on uncourtly ways,  
And wrong and woe were charter'd on his page,  
With some horizon-glimpse of sweeter days.  
And on the land the message of his lays  
Smote like the strong North-wind, and cleansed the sky  
With wholesome blast and bitter clarion-cry,

Summoning the people in the Ploughman's name.  
—So fought his fight, and pass'd unknown away;  
Seeking no other praise, no sculptured fame  
Nor laureate honours for his artless lay,  
Nor in the Minster laid with high array;—  
But where the May-thorn gleams, the grasses wave,  
And the wind sighs o'er a forgotten grave.

Langland, whom I have put here in contrast with Chaucer, is said to have lived between 1332 and 1400. His *Vision of Piers the Plowman* (who is partially identified with our blessed Saviour), with some added poems, forms an allegory on life in England, in Church and State, as it appeared to him during the dislocated and corrupt age which followed the superficial glories of Edward the Third's earlier years.

p. 62*Took the toll*; Amongst other official employments, Chaucer was Comptroller of the Customs in the Port of London. See his *House of Fame*; and the beautiful picture of his walks at dawning in the daisy-meadows: Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*.

*His of Certaldo*, . . . *in Scythia*; Boccaccio:—and Ovid, who died in exile at Tomi:—to both of whom Chaucer is greatly indebted for the substance of his tales.

*Picture-like*; 'It is chiefly as a comic poet, and a minute observer of manners and circumstances, that Chaucer excels. In serious and moral poetry he is frequently languid and diffuse, but he springs like Antaeus from the earth when his subject changes to coarse satire or merry narrative' (Hallam, *Mid. Ages*: Ch. IX: Pt. iii).

*The Tabard*; Inn in Southwark whence the pilgrims to Canterbury start.

*Down the Strand*; It is thus that Langland describes himself and his feelings of dissatisfaction with the world.

*That worst woe*; Literature, even ancient literature, has no phrase more deeply felt and pathetic than the words which the Persian nobleman at the feast in Thebes before Plataea addressed to Thersander of Orchomenus:—[Εχθίστη ὁδὸν τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι, πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδενὸς κρατεῖν]: (*Herodotus*, IX: xvi).

*One morn he lay*; The *Vision* opens with a picture of the poet asleep on Malvern Hill: the last of the added poems closing as he wakes with the Easter chimes.

*Old measures*; Langland's metre 'is more uncouth than that of his predecessors' (Hallam, *Mid. Ag.* Ch. IX: Pt. iii).

*In the Minster*; Chaucer was buried at the entrance of S. Benet's Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

## JEANNE D'ARC

1424

So many stars in heaven,—  
Flowers in the meadow that shine;  
—This little one of Domremy,  
What special grace is thine?  
By the fairy beech and the fountain  
What but a child with thy brothers?  
p. 63Among the maids of the valley

Art more than one among others?

Chosen darling of Heaven,  
Yet at heart wast only a child!  
And for thee the wild things of Nature  
Sot aside their nature wild:—  
The brown-eyed fawn of the forest  
Came silently glancing upon thee;  
The squirrel slipp'd down from the fir,  
And nestled his gentleness on thee.

*Angelus* bell and *Ave*,  
Like voices they follow the maid  
As she follows her sheep in the valley  
From the dawn to the folding shade:—  
For the world that we cannot see  
Is the world of her earthly seeing;  
From the air of the hills of God  
She draws her breath and her being.

Dances by beech tree and fountain,  
They know her no longer:—apart  
Sitting with thought and with vision  
In the silent shrine of the heart.  
And a voice henceforth and for ever  
Within, without her, is sighing  
'Pity for France, O pity,  
France the beloved, the dying!'

—Now between church-wall and cottage  
What comes in the blinding light,  
—Rainbow plumes and armour,  
Face as the sun in his height . . .  
'Angel that pierced the red dragon,  
Pity for France, O pity!  
Holy one, thou shalt save her,  
Vineyard and village and city!'

p. 64Poor sweet child of Domremy,  
In thine innocence only strong,  
Thou seest not the treason before thee,  
The gibe and the curse of the throng,—  
The furnace-pile in the market  
That licks out its flames to take thee;—  
For He who loves thee in heaven  
On earth will not forsake thee!

Poor sweet maid of Domremy,  
In thine innocence secure,  
Heed not what men say of thee,  
The buffoon and his jest impure!  
Nor care if thy name, young martyr,  
Be the star of thy country's story:—  
Mid the white-robed host of the heavens  
Thou hast more than glory!

*Angel that pierced*; 'She *had* pity, to use the phrase for ever on her lip, *on the fair realm of France*. She saw visions; St. Michael appeared to her in a flood of blinding light': (*Green*, B. IV: ch. vi).

*The buffoon*; Voltaire.

# TOWTON FIELD

Palm Sunday: 1461

Love, Who from the throne above  
Cam'st to teach the law of love,  
Who Thy peaceful triumph hast  
Led o'er palms before Thee cast,  
E'en in highest heaven Thine eyes  
Turn from this day's sacrifice!  
Slaughter whence no victor host  
Can the palms of triumph boast;  
p. 65Blood on blood in rivers spilt,—  
English blood by English guilt!

From the gracious Minster-towers  
Of York the priests behold afar  
The field of Towton shimmer like a star  
With light of lance and helm; while both the powers  
Misnamed from the fair rose, with one fell blow,  
—In snow-dazed, blinding air  
Mass'd on the burnside bare,—  
Each army, as one man, drove at the opposing foe.

Ne'er since then, and ne'er before,  
On England's fields with English hands  
Have met for death such myriad myriad bands,  
Such wolf-like fury, and such greed of gore:—  
No natural kindly touch, no check of shame:  
And no such bestial rage  
Blots our long story's page;  
Such lewd remorseless swords, such selfishness of aim

—Gracious Prince of Peace! Yet Thou  
May'st look and bless with lenient eyes  
When trodden races 'gainst their tyrant rise,  
And the bent back no more will deign to bow:  
Or when they crush some old anarchic feud,  
And found the throne anew  
On Law to Freedom true,  
Cleansing the land they love from guilt of blood by blood.

Nor did Heaven unmoved behold  
When Hellas, for her birthright free  
Dappling with gore the dark Saronian sea,  
The Persian wave back, past Abydos, roll'd:—  
But in this murderous match of chief 'gainst chief  
No chivalry had part,  
p. 66No impulse of the heart;  
Nor any sigh for Right triumphant breathes relief.

—Midday comes: and no release,  
No carnage-pause to blow on blow!  
While through the choir the palm-wreathed children go,  
And gay hosannas hail the Prince of Peace:—  
And evening falls, and from the Minster height  
They see the wan Ouse stream  
Blood-dark with slaughter gleam,  
And hear the demon-struggle shrieking through the night.

Love, o'er palms in triumph strown  
Passing, through the crowd alone,—  
Silent 'mid the exulting cry,—  
At Jerusalem to die:  
Thou, foreknowing all, didst know  
How Thy blood in vain would flow!  
How our madness oft would prove  
Recreant to the law of love:  
Wrongs that men from men endure  
Doing Thee to death once more!

‘On the 29th of March 1461 the two armies encountered one another at Towton Field, near Tadcaster. In the numbers engaged, as well as in the terrible obstinacy of the struggle, no such battle had been seen in England since the field of Senlac. The two armies together numbered nearly 120,000 men’: (*Green*, B. IV: ch. vi).

*Saronian sea*; Scene of the battle of Salamis, b.c. 480.

*They see the wan Ouse stream*; Mr. R. Wilton, of Londesborough, has kindly pointed out to me that *Wharfe*, which from a brook received the bloodshed of Towton, does not discharge into *Ouse* until about ten miles south of York. The *gleam* is, therefore, visionary: (1889).

**p. 67GROCYN AT OXFORD**

*THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE*

1491

As she who in some village-child unknown,  
With rustic grace and fantasy bedeck'd  
And in her simple loveliness alone,  
A sister finds;—and the long years' neglect  
Effaces with warm love and nursing care,  
And takes her heart to heart,  
And in her treasured treasures bids her freely share,

And robes with radiance new, new strength and grace:—  
Hellas and England! thus it was with ye!  
Though distanced far by centuries and by space,  
Sisters in soul by Nature's own decree.  
And if on Athens in her glory-day  
The younger might not look,  
Her living soul came back, and reinfused our clay.

—It was not wholly lost, that better light,  
Not in the darkest darkness of our day;  
From cell to cell, e'en through the Danish night,  
The torch ran on its firefly fitful way;  
And blazed anew with him who in the vale  
Of fair Aosta saw  
The careless reaper-bands, and pass'd the heavens' high pale,

And supp'd with God, in vision! Or with him,  
Earliest and greatest of his name, who gave  
His life to Nature, in her caverns dim  
Tracking her soul, through poverty to the grave,  
And left his Great Work to the barbarous age  
That, in its folly-love,  
With wizard-fame defamed his and sweet Vergil's page.

p. 68But systems have their day, and die, or change



Transform'd to new: Not now from cloister-cell  
And desk-bow'd priest, breathes out that impulse strange  
'Neath which the world of feudal Europe fell:—  
Throes of new birth, new life; while men despair'd  
Or triumph'd in their pride,  
As in their eyes the torch of learning fiercely flared.

For now the cry of Homer's clarion first  
And Plato's golden tongue on English ears  
And souls aflame for that new doctrine burst,  
As Grocyn taught, when, after studious years,  
He came from Arno to the liberal walls  
That welcomed me in youth,  
And nursed in Grecian lore, long native to her halls.

O voice that spann'd the gulf of vanish'd years,  
Evoking shapes of old from night to light,  
Lo at thy spell a long-lost world appears,  
Where Rome and Hellas break upon our sight:—  
The Gothic gloom divides; a glory burns  
Behind the clouds of Time,  
And all that wonder-past in beauty's glow returns.

—For when the Northern floods that lash'd and curl'd  
Around the granite fragments of great Rome  
Outspread Colossus-like athwart the world,  
Foam'd down, and the new nations found their home,  
That earlier Europe, law and arts and arms,  
Fell into far-off shade,  
Or lay like some fair maid sleep-sunk in magic charms.

And as in lands once flourishing, now forlorn,  
And desolate capitals, the traveller sees  
Wild tribes, in ruins from the ruins torn  
Hutted like beasts 'mid marble palaces,  
p. 69Unknowing what those relics mean, and whose  
The goblets gold-enchased  
And images of the gods the broken vaults disclose;

So in the Mid-age from the Past of Man  
The Present was parted; and they stood  
As on some island, sever'd from the plan  
Of the great world, and the sea's twilight flood  
Around them, and the monsters of the unknown;  
Blind fancy mix'd with fact;  
Faith in the things unseen sustaining them alone.

Age of extremes and contrasts!—where the good  
Was more than human in its tenderness  
Of chivalry;—Beauty's self the prize of blood,  
And evil raging round with wild excess  
Of more than brutal:—A disjointed time!  
Doubt with Hypocrisy pair'd,  
And purest Faith by folly, childlike, led to crime.

O Florentine, O Master, who alone  
From thy loved Vergil till our Shakespeare came  
Didst climb the long steps to the imperial throne,  
With what immortal dyes of angry flame  
Hast blazon'd out the vileness of the day!

What tints of perfect love

Rosier than summer rose, etherealize thy lay!

—Now, as in some new land when night is deep  
The pilgrim halts, nor knows what round him lies  
And wakes with dawn, and finds him on the steep,  
While plains beneath and unguess'd summits rise,  
And stately rivers widening to the sea,  
Cities of men and towers,

Abash'd for very joy, and gazing fearfully;—

New worlds, new wisdom, a new birth of things  
On Europe shine, and men know where they stand:

p. 70The sea his western portal open flings,  
And bold Sebastian strikes the flowery land:  
Soon, heaven its secret yields; the golden sun  
Enthrones him in the midst,

And round his throne man and the planets humbly run.

New learning all! yet fresh from fountains old,  
Hellenic inspiration, pure and deep:  
Strange treasures of Byzantine hoards unroll'd,  
And mouldering volumes from monastic sleep,  
Reclad with life by more than magic art:

Till that old world renew'd

His youth, and in the past the present own'd its part.

—O vision that ye saw, and hardly saw,  
Ye who in Alfred's path at Oxford trod,  
Or in our London train'd by studious law  
The little-ones of Christ to Him and God,  
Colet and Grocyn!—Though the world forget  
The labours of your love,

In loving hearts your names live in their fragrance yet.

O vision that our happier eyes have seen!  
For not till peace came with Elizabeth  
Did those fair maids of holy Hippocrene  
Cross the wan waves and draw a northern breath:  
Though some far-echoed strain on Tuscan lyres

Our Chaucer caught, and sang

Like her who sings ere dawn has lit his Eastern fires;—

Herald of that first splendour, when the sky  
Was topaz-clear with hope, and life-blood-red  
With thoughts of mighty poets, lavishly  
Round all the fifty years' horizon shed:—

Now in our glades the Aglaian Graces gleam,

Around our fountains throng,

And change Ilissus' banks for Thames and Avon stream.

p. 71Daughters of Zeus and bright Eurynomé,  
She whose blue waters pave the Aegaeon plain,  
Children of all surrounding sky and sea,  
A larger ocean claims you, not in vain!

Ye who to Helicon from Thessalia wide

Wander'd when earth was young,

Come from Libethrion, come; our love, our joy, our pride!

Ah! since your gray Pierian ilex-groves

Felt the despoiling tread of barbarous feet,  
This land, o'er all, the Delian leader loves;  
Here is your favourite home, your genuine seat:—  
In these green western isles renew the throne  
Where Grace by Wisdom shines;  
—We welcome with full hearts, and claim you for our own!

If, looking at England, one point may be singled out in that long movement, generalized under the name of the Renaissance, as critical, it is the introduction of the Greek and Latin literature:—which has remained ever since conspicuously the most powerful and enlarging element, the most effectively educational, among all branches of human study.

*In the vale Of fair Aosta*; See Anselm's youthful vision of the gleaners and the palace of heaven (Green: *History*, B. II: ch. ii).

*His Great Work*; Roger Bacon's so-named *Opus Majus*: 'At once,' says Whewell, 'the Encyclopaedia and the Novum Organum of the thirteenth century.' Like Vergil, Bacon passed at one time for a magician.

*That new doctrine*; Grocyn was perhaps the first Englishman who studied Greek under Chalcondylas the Byzantine at Florence; certainly the first who lectured on Greek in England. This was in the Hall of Exeter College, Oxford, in 1491. To him Erasmus (1499) came to study the language.—See the brilliant account of the revival of learning in Green, *Hist.* B. V: ch. ii.

*Master, who alone*; See *The Poet's Euthanasia*.

*Sebastian*; Cabot, who, in 1497, sailed from Bristol, and reached Florida.

*The golden sun*; Refers to Copernicus; whose solar system was, however, not published till 1543.

*The little-ones*; Colet, Dean of S. Paul's, founded the school in 1510. p. 72 'The bent of its founder's mind was shown by the image of the Child Jesus over the master's chair, with the words *Hear ye Him* graven beneath it' (Green: B. V: ch. iv).

*Fifty years*; Between 1570 and 1620 lies almost all the glorious production of our so-called Elizabethan period.

*From Libethrion*;—*Nymphae, noster amor, Libethrides!* . . . What a music is there in the least little fragment of Vergil's exquisite art!

## MARGARET TUDOR

### PROTHALAMION

1503

Love who art above us all,  
Guard the treasure on her way,  
Flower of England, fair and tall,  
Maiden-wise and maiden-gay,  
As her northward path she goes;  
Daughter of the double rose.

Look with twofold grace on her  
Who from twofold root has grown,  
Flower of York and Lancaster,  
Now to grace another throne,  
Rose in Scotland's garden set,—  
Britain's only Margaret.

Exile-child from childhood's bower,  
Pledge and bond of Henry's faith,  
James, take home our English flower,

Guard from touch of scorn and skaith;  
Bearing, in her slender hands,  
Palms of peace to hostile lands.

Safe by southern smiling shires,  
Many a city, many a shrine;  
p. 73By the newly kindled fires  
Of the black Northumbrian mine;  
Border clans in ambush set;  
Carry thou fair Margaret.

—Land of heath and hill and linn,  
Land of mountain-freedom wild,  
She in heart to thee is kin,  
Tudor’s daughter, Gwynedd’s child!  
In her lively lifeblood share  
Gwenllian and Anghárad fair.

East and West, from Dee to Yare,  
Now in equal bonds are wed:  
Peace her new-found flower shall wear,  
Rose that dapples white with red;  
North and South, dissever’d yet,  
Join in this fair Margaret!

Ocean round our Britain roll’d,  
Sapphire ring without a flaw,  
When wilt thou one realm enfold,  
One in freedom, one in law?  
Will that ancient feud be sped,  
Brothers’ blood by brothers shed?

—Land with freedom’s struggle sore,  
Land to whom thy children cling  
With a lover’s love and more,  
Take the gentle gift we bring!  
Pearl in thy crown royal set;  
Scotland’s other Margaret.

Margaret Tudor, daughter to Henry VII, married in 1502 to James IV, and afterwards to Lord Angus, was thus great-grandmother on both sides to James I of England.

*Gwynedd’s child*; The Tudors intermarried with the old royal family p. 74of North Wales, in whose pedigree occur the girl-names Gwenllian and Angharad.

*Other Margaret*; Sister to Edgar the Etheling, and wife to Malcolm. Her life and character are in contrast to the unhappy and unsatisfactory career of Margaret Tudor, whom I have here only treated as at once representing and uniting England, Scotland, and Wales.

## LONDON BRIDGE

July 6: 1535

The midnight moaning stream  
Draws down its glassy surface through the bridge  
That o’er the current casts a tower’d ridge,  
Dark sky-line forms fantastic as a dream;  
And cresset watch-lights on the bridge-gate gleam,  
Where ’neath the star-lit dome gaunt masts upbuoy  
No flag of festive joy,

But blanching spectral heads;—their heads, who died  
Victims to tyrant-pride,  
Martyrs of Faith and Freedom in the day  
Of shame and flame and brutal selfish sway.

And one in black array  
Veiling her Rizpah-misery, to the gate  
Comes, and with gold and moving speech sedate  
Buys down the thing aloft, and bears away  
Snatch'd from the withering wind and ravens' prey:  
And as a mother's eyes, joy-soften'd, shed  
Tears o'er her young child's head,  
Golden and sweet, from evil saved; so she  
O'er this, sad-smilingly,  
Mangled and gray, unwarm'd by human breath,  
Clasping death's relic with love passing death.

p. 75 So clasping now! and so  
When death clasps her in turn! e'en in the grave  
Nursing the precious head she could not save,  
Tho' through each drop her life-blood yearn'd to flow  
If but for him she might to scaffold go:—  
And O! as from that Hall, with innocent gore  
Sacred from roof to floor,  
To that grim other place of blood he went—  
What cry of agony rent  
The twilight,—cry as of an Angel's pain,—  
*My father, O my father!* . . . and in vain!

Then, as on those who lie  
Cast out from bliss, the days of joy come back,  
And all the soul with wormwood sweetness rack,  
So in that trance of dreadful ecstasy  
The vision of her girlhood glinted by:—  
And how the father through their garden stray'd,  
And, child with children, play'd,  
And teased the rabbit-hutch, and fed the dove  
Before him from above  
Alighting,—in his visitation sweet,  
Led on by little hands, and eager feet.

Hence among those he stands,  
Elect ones, ever in whose ears the word  
*He that offends these little ones* . . . is heard,  
With love and kisses smiling-out commands,  
And all the tender hearts within his hands;  
Seeing, in every child that goes, a flower  
From Eden's nursery bower,  
A little stray from Heaven, for reverence here  
Sent down, and comfort dear:  
All care well paid-for by one pure caress,  
And life made happy in their happiness.

p. 76 He too, in deeper lore  
Than woman's in those early days, or yet,—  
Train'd step by step his youthful Margaret;  
The wonders of that amaranthine store  
Which Hellas and Hesperia evermore  
Lavish, to strengthen and refine the race:—  
For, in his large embrace,

The light of faith with that new light combined  
To purify the mind:—  
A crystal soul, a heart without disguise,  
All wisdom's lover, and through love, all-wise.

—O face she ne'er will see,—  
Gray eyes, and careless hair, and mobile lips  
From which the shaft of kindly satire slips  
Healing its wound with human sympathy;  
The heart-deep smile; the tear-concealing glee!  
O well-known furrows of the reverend brow!  
Familiar voice, that now  
She will not hear nor answer any more,—  
Till on the better shore  
Where love completes the love in life begun,  
And smooths and knits our ravell'd skein in one!

Blest soul, who through life's course  
Didst keep the young child's heart unstain'd and whole,  
To find again the cradle at the goal,  
Like some fair stream returning to its source;—  
Ill fall'n on days of falsehood, greed, and force!  
Base days, that win the plaudits of the base,  
Writ to their own disgrace,  
With casuist sneer o'erglossing works of blood,  
Miscalling evil, good;  
Before some despot-hero falsely named  
Groveling in shameful worship unashamed.

p. 77—But they of the great race  
Look equably, not caring much, on foe  
And fame and misesteem of man below;  
And with forgiving radiance on their face,  
And eyes that aim beyond the bourn of space,  
Seeing the invisible, glory-clad, go up  
And drink the absinthine cup,  
Fill'd nectar-deep by the dear love of Him  
Slain at Jerusalem  
To free them from a tyrant worse than this,  
Changing brief anguish for the heart of bliss.

### *Envoy*

—O moaning stream of Time,  
Heavy with hate and sin and wrong and woe  
As ocean-ward dost go,  
Thou also hast thy treasures!—Life, sublime  
In its own sweet simplicity:—life for love:  
Heroic martyr-death:—  
Man sees them not: but they are seen above.

*One in black array*; Sir T. More's daughter, Margaret Roper.

*That Hall*; Westminster, where More was tried: *That other place*; Tower Hill.

*The vision of her girlhood*; More taught his own children, and was like a child with them. He 'would take grave scholars and statesmen into the garden to see his girls' rabbit-hutches. . . . *I have given you kisses enough*, he wrote to his little ones, *but stripes hardly ever*: (Green, B. V: ch. ii).

*The wonders*; See first note to *Grocyn at Oxford*.

*In his large embrace*; More may be said to have represented the highest aim and effort of the ‘new learning’ in England. He is the flower of our Renaissance in genius, wisdom, and beauty of nature. ‘When ever,’ says Erasmus in a famous passage, ‘did Nature mould a character more gentle, endearing, and happy, than Thomas More’s?’

**p. 78AT FOUNTAINS**

1539-1862

Blest hour, as on green happy slopes I lie,  
Gray walls around and high,  
While long-ranged arches lessen on the view,  
And one high gracious curve  
Of shaftless window frames the limpid blue.

—God’s altar erst, where wind-set rowan now  
Waves its green-finger’d bough,  
And the brown tiny creeper mounts the bole  
With curious eye alert,  
And beak that tries each insect-haunted hole,

And lives her gentle life from nest to nest,  
And dies undispossess’d:  
Whilst all the air is quick with noise of birds  
Where once the chant went up;  
Now musical with a song more sweet than words.

Sky-roof’d and bare and deep in dewy sod,  
Still ’tis the house of God!  
Beauty by desolation unsubdued:—  
And all the past is here,  
Thronging with thought this holy solitude.

I see the taper-stars, the altars gay;  
And those who crouch and pray;  
The white-robed crowd in close monastic stole,  
Who hither fled the world  
To find the world again within the soul.

Yet here the pang of Love’s defeat, the pride  
Of life unsatisfied,  
Might win repose or anodyne; here the weak,  
p. 79Armour’d against themselves,  
Exchange true guiding for obedience meek.

Through day, through night, here, in the fragrant air,  
Their hours are struck by prayer;  
Freed from the bonds of freedom, the distress  
Of choice, on life’s storm-sea  
They gaze unharm’d, and know their happiness.

Till o’er this rock of refuge, deem’d secure,  
—This palace of the poor,  
Ascetic luxury, wealth too frankly shown,—  
The royal robber swept  
His lustful eye, and seized the prey his own.

—Ah, calm of Nature! Now thou hold’st again  
Thy sweet and silent reign!  
And, as our feverish years their orbit roll,  
This pure and cloister’d peace

In its old healing virtue bathes the soul.

1539 is the year when the greater monasteries, amongst which Fountains in Yorkshire held a prominent place, were confiscated and ruined by Henry VIII.

*The tiny creeper*; *Certhia Familiaris*; the smallest of our birds after the wren. It belongs to a class nearly related to the woodpecker.

*White-robed*; The colour of the Cistercian order, to which Fountains belonged.

## **p. 80SIR HUGH WILLOUGHBY**

1553-4

Two ships upon the steel-blue Arctic seas  
When day was long and night itself was day,  
Forged heavily before the South West breeze  
As to the steadfast star they curved their way;  
Two specks of man, two only signs of life,  
Where with all breathing things white Death keeps endless strife.

The Northern Cape is sunk: and to the crew  
This zone of sea, with ice-floes wedged and rough,  
Domed by its own pure height of tender blue,  
Seems like a world from the great world cut off:  
While, round the horizon clasp'd, a ring of white,  
Snow-blink from snows unseen, walls them with angry light.

Now that long day compact of many days  
Breaks up and wanes; and equal night beholds  
Their hapless driftage past uncharted bays,  
And in her chilling, killing arms enfolds:  
While the near stars a thousand arrowy darts  
Bend from their diamond eyes, as the low sun departs.

Or the weird Northern Dawn in idle play  
Mocks their sad souls, now trickling down the sky  
In many-quivering lines of golden spray,  
Then blazing out, an Iris-arch on high,  
With fiery lances fill'd and feathery bars,  
And sheeny veils that hide or half-reveal the stars.

A silent spectacle! Yet sounds, 'tis said,  
On their forlornness broke; a hissing cry  
Of mockery and wild laugh, as, overhead,  
p. 81Those blight fantastic squadrons flaunted by:—  
And that false dawn, long nickering, died away,  
And the Sun came not forth, and Heaven withheld the day.

O King Hyperion, o'er the Delphic dale  
Reigning meanwhile in glory, Ocean know  
Thine absence, and outstretch'd an icy veil,  
A marble pavement, o'er his waters blue;  
Past the Varangian fiord and Zembla hoar,  
And from Petsora north to dark Arzina's shore:—

An iron ridge o'erhung with toppling snow  
And giant beards of icicled cascade:—  
Where, frost-imprison'd as the long mouths go,  
The *Good Hope* and her mate-ship lay embay'd;



And those brave crews knew that all hope was gone;  
England be seen no more; no more the living sun.

A store that daily lessens 'neath their eyes;  
A little dole of light and fire and food:—  
While Night upon them like a vampyre lies  
Bleaching the frame and thinning out the blood;  
And through the ships the frost-bit timbers groan,  
And the Guloine prowls round, with dull heart-curdling moan.

Then sometimes on the soul, far off, how far!  
Came back the shouting crowds, the cannon-roar,  
The latticed palace glittering like a star,  
The buoyant Thames, the green, sweet English shore,  
The heartfelt prayers, the fireside blaze and bliss,  
The little faces bright, and woman's last, last kiss.

—O yet, for all their misery, happy souls!  
Happy in faith and love and fortitude:—  
For you, one thought of England dear controls  
All shrinking of the flesh at death so rude!  
p. 82 Though long at rest in that far Arctic grave,  
True sailor hero hearts, van of our bravest brave.

And one by one the North King's searching lance  
Touch'd, and they stiffen'd at their task, and died;  
And their stout leader glanced a farewell glance;  
'God is as close by sea as land,' he cried,  
'In His own light not nearer than this gloom,'—  
And look'd as one who o'er the mountains sees his home.

Home!—happy sound of vanish'd happiness!  
—But when the unwilling sun crept up again,  
And loosed the sea from winter and duresse,  
The seal-wrapt race that roams the Lapland main  
Saw in Arzina, wondering, fearing more,  
The tatter'd ships, in snows entomb'd and vaulted o'er:

And clomb the decks, and found the gallant crew,  
As forms congeal'd to stone, where frozen fate  
Took each man in his turn, and gently slew:—  
Nor knew the heroic chieftain, as he sate,  
English through every fibre, in his place,  
The smile of duty done upon the steadfast face.

Sir Hugh Willoughby, in the *Bona Esperanza*, with two other vessels, sailed May 10, 1553, saluting the palace of Greenwich as they passed. By September 18 he, with one consort, reached the harbour of Arzina, where all perished early in 1554. His will, dated in January of that year, was found when the ships were discovered by the Russians soon after.

Willoughby has been taken here as the representative of the great age of British naval adventure and exploration.

*Arzina* is placed near the western headland of the White Sea, east of the Waranger Fiord, and west of Nova Zembla and the mouth of the Petchora.

**p. 83CROSSING SOLWAY**

May 16: 1568

Blow from the North, thou bitter North wind,

Blow over the western bay,  
Where Nith and Eden and Esk run in  
And fight with the salt sea spray,  
And the sun shines high through the sailing sky  
In the freshness of blue Mid-may.

Blow North-North-West, and hollow the sails  
Of a Queen who slips over the sea  
As a hare from the hounds; and her covert afar;  
And now she can only flee;  
And death before and the sisterly shore  
That smiles perfidiously.

O Mid-may freshness about her cheek  
And piercing her poor attire,  
The sting of defeat thou canst not allay,  
The fever of heart and the fire,  
The death-despair for the days that were,  
And famine of vain desire!

—On Holyrood stairs an iron-heel'd clank  
Came up in the gloaming hour:  
And iron fingers have bursten the bar  
Of the palace innermost bower:  
And fiend-like on her the Douglas and Ker  
And spectral Ruthven glower.

She hears the shriek as the Morton horde  
Hurry the victim beneath;  
And she feels their dead man's grasp on her skirt  
In the frenzy-terror of death;  
And the dastard King at her bosom cling  
With a serpent's poison-breath.

p. 84O fair girl Queen, well weep for the friend  
To his faith too faithful and thee;  
For a brother's hypocrite tears; for the flight  
To the Castle set by the sea;—  
Where thy father's tomb lay and gaped in the gloom  
'Twere better for thee to be!

O better at rest where the crooning dove  
May sing requiem o'er thy bed,  
Sweet Robin aflame with love's sign on his breast  
With quick light footstep tread;  
While over the sod the Birds of God  
Their guardian feathers outspread!

Too womanly sweet, too womanly frail,  
Alone in thy faith and thy need;  
In the homeless home, in the poisonous air  
Of spite and libel and greed;  
Mid perfidy's net thy pathway is set,  
And thy feet in the pitfalls bleed.

—O lightnings, not lightnings of Heaven, that flare  
Through the desolate House in the Field!  
Craft that the Fiend had envied in vain;  
Till the terrible Day unreveal'd,—  
Till the Angels rejoice at the Verdict-voice,

And Mary's pardon is seal'd!

As a bird from the mesh of the fowler freed  
With wild wing shatters the air,  
From shelter to shelter, betray'd, she flees,  
Or lured to some treacherous lair,  
And the vulture-cry of the enemy nigh,  
And the heavens dark with despair!

Bright lily of France, by the storm stricken low,  
A sunbeam thou seest through the shade  
Where Order and Peace are throned 'neath the smile  
Of a royal sisterly Maid:—

p. 85 For hope in the breast of the girl has her nest,  
Ever trusting, and ever betray'd.

Brave womanly heart that, beholding the shore,  
Beholds her own grave unaware,—  
Though the days to come their shame should unveil  
Yet onward she still would dare!  
Though the meadows smile with statesmanly guile,  
And the cuckoo's call is a snare!

Turn aside, O Queen, from the cruel land,  
From the greedy shore turn away;  
From shame upon shame:—But most shame for those  
On their passionate captive who play  
With a subtle net, hope enwoven with threat,  
Hung out to tempt her astray!

Poor scape-goat of crimes, where,—her part what it may,—  
So tortured, so hunted to die,  
Foul age of deceit and of hate,—on her head  
Least stains of gore-guiltiness lie;  
To the hearts of the just her blood from the dust  
Not in vain for mercy will cry.

Poor scape-goat of nations and faiths in their strife  
So cruel,—and thou so fair!  
Poor girl!—so, best, in her misery named,—  
Discrown'd of two kingdoms, and bare;  
Not first nor last on this one was cast  
The burden that others should share.

—When the race is convened at the great assize  
And the last long trumpet-call,  
If Woman 'gainst Man, in her just appeal,  
At the feet of the Judge should fall,  
O the cause were secure;—the sentence sure!  
—But she will forgive him all!—

p. 86 O keen heart-hunger for days that were;  
Last look at a vanishing shore!  
In two short words all bitterness summ'd,  
That *Has been* and *Nevermore*!  
Nor with one caress will Mary bless,  
Nor look on the babe she bore!

Blow, bitter wind, with a cry of death,  
Blow over the western bay:

The sunshine is gone from the desolate girl,  
And before is the doomster-day,  
And the saw-dust red with the heart's-blood shed  
In the shambles of Fotheringay.

Mary of Scotland is one of the five or six figures in our history who rouse an undying personal interest. Volumes have been and will be written on her:—yet if we put aside the distorting mists of national and political and theological partisanship, the common laws of human nature will give an easy clue to her conduct and that of her enemies.

Her flight from Scotland, as the turning-point in Mary's unhappy and pathetic career, has been here chosen for the moment whence to survey it.

*On Holyrood stairs*; Riccio was murdered on March 9, 1566. Mary's exclamation when she heard of his death next day, *No more tears; I will think upon a revenge*, is the sufficient explanation,—in a great degree should be the sufficient justification, with those who still hold her an accomplice in the death of Darnley and the marriage with Bothwell,—(considering the then lawless state of Scotland, the complicity of the leading nobles, the hopelessness of justice)—of her later conduct whilst Queen.

*The friend*; In Riccio's murder the main determinant was his efficiency in aiding Mary towards a Roman Catholic reaction, which might have deprived a large body of powerful nobles of the church lands. The death of Riccio (Mary's most faithful friend) prevented this: the death of Darnley became necessary to secure the position gained.

*A brother's hypocrite tears*; Murray, in whose interest Riccio was murdered, and whose privy to the murder (as afterwards to that of Darnley) is reasonably, though indirectly, proved, affected to shed tears on seeing his sister. Next day she learned the details of the plot, and her half-brother's share in it.

*The flight*; Mary then fled by a secret passage from Holyrood Palace p. 87through the Abbey Church, the royal tombs which had been broken open by the revolutionary mob of 1559.

*The Castle*; Dunbar.

*Till the terrible Day unreveal'd*; See Appendix A.

**SIDNEY AT ZUTPHEN**

October 2: 1586

1

Where Guelderland outspreads  
Her green wide water-meads  
Laced by the silver of the parted Rhine;  
Where round the horizon low  
The waving millsails go,  
And poplar avenues stretch their pillar'd line;  
That morn a clinging mist uncurl'd  
Its folds o'er South-Fen town, and blotted out the world.

2

There, as the gray dawn broke,  
Cloked by that ghost-white cloke,  
The fifty knights of England sat in steel;  
Each man all ear, for eye  
Could not his nearest spy;  
And in the mirk's dim hiding heart they feel,  
—Feel more than hear,—the signal sound  
Of tramp and hoof and wheel, and guns that bruise the ground.

3

—Sudden, the mist gathers up like a curtain, the theatre clear;  
Stage of unequal conflict, and triumph purchased too dear!  
p. 88Half our boot treasures of gallantry there, with axe and with glaive,  
One against ten,—what of that?—We are ready for glory or grave!  
There, Spain and her thousands nearing, with lightning-tongued weapons of war;—  
Ebro's swarthy sons, and the bands from Epirus afar;  
Crescia, Gonzaga, del Vasto,—world-famous names of affright,  
Veterans of iron and blood, insatiate engines of fight:—  
But ours were Norris and Essex and Stanley and Willoughby grim,  
And the waning Dudley star, and the star that will never be dim,  
Star of Philip the peerless,—and now at height of his noon,  
Astrophel!—not for thyself but for England extinguish'd too soon!

4

Red walls of Zutphen behind; before them, Spain in her might:—  
O! 'tis not war, but a game of heroic boyish delight!  
For on, like a bolt-head of steel, go the fifty, dividing their way,  
Through and over the brown mail-shirts,—Farnese's choicest array;  
Over and through, and the curtel-axe flashes, the plumes in their pride  
Sink like the larch to the hewer, a death-mown avenue wide:  
While the foe in his stubbornness flanks them and bars them, with merciless aim  
Shooting from musket and saker a scornful death-tongue of flame.  
As in an autumn afar, the Six Hundred in Chersonese hew'd  
p. 89Their road through a host, for their England and honour's sake wasting their blood,  
Foolishness wiser than wisdom!—So these, since Azincourt morn,  
First showing the world the calm open-eyed rashness of Englishmen born!

5

Foes ere the cloud went up, black Norris and Stanley in one  
Pledge iron hands and kiss swords, each his mate's, in the face of the sun,  
Warm with the generous wine of the battle; and Willoughby's might  
To the turf bore Crescia, and lifted again,—knight honouring knight;  
All in the hurry and turmoil:—where North, half-booted and rough,  
Launch'd on the struggle, and Sidney struck onward, his cuisses thrown off,  
Rash over-courage of poet and youth!—while the memories, how  
At the joust long syne She look'd on, as he triumph'd, were hot on his brow,  
'Stella! mine own, my own star!'—and he sigh'd:—and towards him a flame  
Shot its red signal; a shriek!—and the viewless messenger came;  
Found the unguarded gap, the approach left bare to the prey,  
Where through the limb to the life the death-stroke shatter'd a way.

6

—Astrophel! England's pride!  
O stroke that, when he died,  
Smote through the realm,—our best, our fairest ta'en!  
For now the wound accurst  
p. 90Lights up death's fury-thirst;—  
Yet the allaying cup, in all that pain,  
Untouch'd, untasted he gives o'er  
To one who lay, and watch'd with eyes that craved it more:—

7

'Take it,' he said, 'tis thine;  
Thy need is more than mine';—  
And smiled as one who looks through death to life:  
—Then pass'd, true heart and brave,

Leal from birth to grave:—  
For that curse-laden roar of mortal strife,  
With God's own peace ineffable fill'd,—  
In that eternal Love all earthly passion still'd.

In 1585 Elizabeth, who was then aiding the United Provinces in their resistance to Spain, sent Sir Philip Sidney (born 1554) as governor of the fortress of Flushing in Zeeland. The Earl of Leicester, chosen by the Queen's unhappy partiality to command the English force, named Sidney (his nephew) General of the horse. He marched thence to Zutphen in Guelderland, a town besieged by the Spaniards, in hopes of destroying a strong reinforcement which they were bringing in aid of the besiegers. The details of the rash and heroic charge which followed may be read in Motley's *History of the United Netherlands*, ch. ix.

St. 1 *Guelderland*; in this province the Rhine divides before entering the sea: 'gliding through a vast plain.'—*South-Fen*; Zutphen, on the Yssel (Rhine).

St. 3 *The bands from Epirus*; Crescia, the Epirote chief, commanded a body of Albanian cavalry.—*The waning Dudley star*; Leicester, who was near the end of his miserable career.—*Astrophel*; Sidney celebrated his love for Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich, in the series of Sonnets and Lyrics named *Astrophel and Stella*:—posthumously published in 1591.—After, or with Shakespeare's Sonnets, this series seems to me to offer the most powerful picture of the passion of love in the whole range of our poetry.

St. 4 *Saker*; early name for field-piece.—*The Six Hundred*; The Crimea in ancient days was named *Chersonesus Taurica*.

St. 5 *Black Norris*; had been at variance with Sir W. Stanley before the engagement. Morris was one of twelve gallant brothers, whose p. 91 complexion followed that of their mother, named by Elizabeth 'her own crow.'—*North*; was lying bedrid from a wound in the leg, but could not resist volunteering at Zutphen, and rode up 'with one boot on and one boot off.'—*Cuisses*;

I saw young Harry, with his beaver on,  
His cuisses on his thighs: (*Henry IV*, Part I: A. iv: S. i):—

Sidney flung off his 'in a fit of chivalrous extravagance.'—*At the joust*; In Sonnets 41 and 53 of *Astrophel and Stella* Sidney describes how the sudden sight of his lady-love dazzled him as he rode in certain tournaments. In Son. 69 he cries:

I, I, O, I, may say that she is mine.

## ELIZABETH AT TILBURY

September: 1588

Let them come, come never so proudly,  
O'er the green waves as giants ride;  
Silver clarions menacing loudly,  
'All the Spains' on their banners wide;  
High on deck of the gilded galleys  
Our light sailers they scorn below:—  
We will scatter them, plague, and shatter them,  
Till their flag hauls down to their foe!  
For our oath we swear  
By the name we bear,  
By England's Queen, and England free and fair,—  
Her's ever and her's still, come life, come death:—  
God save Elizabeth!

Sidonía, Recalde, and Leyva  
Watch from their Castles in swarthy scorn,  
Lords and Princes by Philip's favour;—  
We by birthright are noble born!

Freemen born of the blood of freemen,  
Sons of Crecy and Flodden are we!  
p. 92We shall sunder them, fire, and plunder them,—  
English boats on an English sea!  
And our oath we swear,  
By the name we bear,  
By England's Queen, and England free and fair,—  
Her's ever and her's still, come life, come death!  
God save Elizabeth!

Drake and Frobisher, Hawkins, and Howard,  
Raleigh, Cavendish, Cecil, and Brooke,  
Hang like wasps by the flagships tower'd,  
Sting their way through the thrice-piled oak:—  
Let them range their seven-mile crescent,  
Giant galleons, canvas wide!  
Ours will harry them, board, and carry them,  
Plucking the plumes of the Spanish pride.  
For our oath we swear  
By the name we bear,  
By England's Queen, and England free and fair,—  
Her's ever and her's still, come life, come death!  
God save Elizabeth!

—Hath God risen in wrath and scatter'd?  
Have His tempests smote them in scorn?  
Past the Orcadés, dumb and tatter'd,  
'Mong sea-beasts do they drift forlorn?  
We were as lions hungry for battle;  
God has made our battle His own!  
God has scatter'd them, sunk, and shatter'd them:  
Give the glory to Him alone!  
While our oath we swear,  
By the name we bear,  
By England's Queen, and England free and fair,—  
Her's ever and her's still, come life, come death!  
God save Elizabeth!

**p. 93AT BEMERTON**

1630-1633

Sick with the strife of tongues, the blustering hate  
Of frantic Party raving o'er the realm,  
Sonorous insincerities of debate,  
And jealous factions snatching at the helm,  
And Out o'er-bidding In with graceless strife,  
Selling the State for votes:—O happy fields,  
I cried, where Herbert, by the world misprized,  
Found in his day the life  
That no unrest or disappointment yields,  
Vergilian vision here best realized!

His memory is Peace: and peace is here;—  
The eternal lullaby of the level brook,  
With bird-like chirpings mingled, glassy-clear;  
The narrow pathway to the yew-clipp'd nook;  
Trim lawn, familiar to the pensive feet;  
The long gray walls he raised:—A household nest

Where Hope and firm-eyed Faith and heavenly Love  
    Made human love more sweet;  
While,—earth's rare visitant from the choirs above,—  
Urania's holy steps the cottage blest.

Peace there:—and peace upon the house of God,  
The little road-side church that room-like stands  
Crouching entrench'd in slopes of daisy sod,  
And duly deck'd by Herbert-honouring hands:—  
Cell of detachment! Shrine to which the heart  
Withdraws, and all the roar of life is still;  
Then sinks into herself, and finds a shrine  
    Within the shrine apart:

p. 94Alone with God, as on the Arabian hill  
Man knelt in vision to the All-divine!

—Thrice happy they,—and know their happiness,—  
Who read the soul's star-orbit Heaven-ward clear;  
Not roving comet-like through doubt and guess,  
But 'neath their feet tread nescient pride and fear;  
Scan the unseen with sober certainty,  
God's hill above Himalah;—Love green earth  
With deeper, truer love, because the blue  
    Of Heaven around they see;—  
Who in the death-gasp hail man's second birth,  
And yield their loved ones with a brief adieu!

—Thee, too, esteem I happy in thy death,  
Poet! while yet peace was, and thou might'st live  
Unvex'd in thy sweet reasonable faith,  
The gracious creed that knows how to forgive:—  
Not narrowing God to self,—the common bane  
Of sects, each man his own small oracle;  
Not losing innerness in external rite;  
    A worship pure and plain,  
Yet liberal to man's heaven-imbreathed delight  
In all that sound can hint, or beauty tell.

A golden moderation!—which the wise  
Then highest rate, when fury-factions roar,  
And folly's choicest fools the most despise:—  
—O happy Poet! laid in peace before  
Rival intolerants each 'gainst other flamed,  
And flames were slaked in blood, and all the grace  
Of life before that sad illiterate gloom  
    Puritan, fled ashamed:  
While, as the red moon lifts her turbid face,  
Titanic features on the horizon loom!

p. 95George Herbert's brief career as a parish priest was passed at Bemerton, a pretty village near Salisbury in the vale of the Avon. His parsonage, with its garden running down to the stream, and the little church across the road in which he lies buried, remain comparatively unchanged (March 26, 1880) since he lived and mused and wrote his Poems within these precincts. The justly-famous *Temple* was published shortly after his death by his friend Nicholas Ferrar.

*Arabian hill*; Mount Sinai.

*Titanic features*; See *A Churchyard in Oxfordshire*, st. iii.

**PRINCESS ANNE**



Harsh words have been utter'd and written on her, Henrietta the Queen:  
She was young in a difficult part, on a cruel and difficult scene:—  
Was it strange she should fail? that the King overmuch should bow down to her will?  
—So of old with the women, God bless them!—it was, so will ever be still!  
Rash in counsel and rash in courage, she aided and marr'd  
The shifting tides of the fight, the star of the Stuarts ill-starr'd.  
In her the false Florentine blood,—in him the bad strain of the Guise;  
Suspicion against her and hate, all that malice can forge and devise;—  
As a bird by the fowlers o'ernetted, she shuffles and changes her ground;  
No wile unlawful in war, and the foe unscrupulous round!  
Woman-like overbelieving Herself and the Cause and the Man,  
Fights with two-edged intrigue, suicidal, plan upon plan;  
p. 96Till the law of this world had its way, and she fled,—like a frigate unsail'd,  
Unmasted, unflagg'd,—to her land; and the strength of the stronger prevail'd.

But it was not thus, not thus, in the years of thy springtide, O Queen,  
When thy children came in their beauty, and all their future unseen:  
When the kingdom had wealth and peace, one smile o'er the face of the land:  
England, too happy, if thou could'st thy happiness understand!  
As those over Etna who slumber, and under them rankles the fire.  
At her side was the gallant King, her first-love, her girlhood's desire,  
And around her, best jewels and dearest to brighten the steps of the throne,  
Three golden heads, three fair little maids, in their nursery shone.  
'As the mother, so be the daughters,' they say:—nor could mother wish more  
For her own, than men saw in the Queen's, ere the rosebud-dawning was o'er,  
Heart-wise and head-wise, a joy to behold, as they knelt for her kiss,—  
Best crown of a woman's life, her true vocation and bliss!—  
But the flowers were pale and frail, and the mother watch'd them with dread,  
As the sunbeams play'd round the room on each gay, glistening head.

p. 97Anne in that garden of childhood grew nearest Elizabeth: she  
Tenderly tended and loved her, a babe with a babe on her knee:  
Slight and white from the cradle was Anne; a floweret born  
Rathe, out of season, a rose that peep'd out when the hedge was in thorn.  
'Why should it be so with us?' thought Elizabeth oft; for in her  
The soul 'gainst the body protesting, was but more keenly astir:  
'As saplings stunted by forest around o'ershading, we two:  
What work for our life, my mother,' she said, 'is left us to do?  
Or is't from the evil to come, the days without pleasure, that God  
In mercy would spare us, over our childhood outstretching the rod?'  
—So she, from her innocent heart; in all things seeing the best  
With the wholesome spirit of childhood; to God submitting the rest:  
Not seeing the desolate years, the dungeon of Carisbrook drear;  
Eyes dry-glazed with fever, and none to lend even a tear!  
Now, all her heart to the little one goes; for, day upon day,  
As a rosebud in canker, she pales and pines, and the cough has its way.  
And the gardens of Richmond on Thames, the fine blythe air of the vale  
Stay not the waning pulse, and the masters of science fail.  
Then the little footsteps are faint, and a child may take her with ease;  
As the flowers a babe flings down she is spread on Elizabeth's knees,  
p. 98Slipping back to the cradle-life, in her wasting weakness and pain:  
And the sister prays and smiles and watches the sister in vain.

So she watch'd by the bed all night, and the lights were yellow and low,  
And a cold blue blink shimmer'd up from the park that was sheeted in snow:  
And the frost of the passing hour, when souls from the body divide,  
The Sarsar-wind of the dawn, crept into the palace, and sigh'd.  
And the child just turn'd her head towards Elizabeth there as she lay,

And her little hands came together in haste, as though she would pray;  
 And the words wrestled in her for speech that the fever-dry mouth cannot frame,  
 And the strife of the soul on the delicate brow was written in flame:  
 And Elizabeth call'd 'O Father, why does she look at me so?  
 Will it soon be better for Anne? her face is all in a glow':—  
 But with womanly speed and heed is the mother beside her, and slips  
 Her arm 'neath the failing head, and moistens the rose of the lips,  
 Pale and sweet as the wild rose of June, and whispers to pray  
 To the Father in heaven, 'the one she likes best, my baby, to say':  
 And the soul hover'd yet o'er the lips, as a dove when her pinions are spread,  
 And the light of the after-life came again in her eyes, and she said;  
 p. 99 'For my long prayer it is not time; for my short one I think I have breath;  
*Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not the sleep of death.*  
 —O! into life, fair child, as she pray'd, her innocence slept!  
 'It is better for her,' they said:—and knelt, and kiss'd her, and wept.

*In her;* Henrietta's mother was by birth Mary de' Medici; the great-grandmother of Charles was Mary of Guise.

'With Charles I,' says Ranke, 'nothing was more seductive than secrecy. The contradictions in his conduct entangled him in embarrassments, in which his declarations, if always true in the sense he privately gave them, were only a hair's-breadth removed from actual, and even from intentional, untruth.'—Whether traceable to descent, or to the evil influence of Buckingham and the intriguing atmosphere of the Spanish marriage-negotiations, this defect in political honesty is, unquestionably, the one serious blot on the character of Charles I.—Yet, whilst noting it, candid students will regretfully confess that the career of Elizabeth and her counsellors is defaced by shades of bad faith, darker and more numerous.

*When the kingdom;* See Clarendon's description of England during this period, 'enjoying the greatest calm and the fullest measure of felicity that any people in any age for so long time together have been blessed with.'

*Three golden heads;* Mary, the second child of Charles and Henrietta, was born Nov. 4, 1631: Elizabeth, Dec. 28, 1635: Anne, Mar. 17, 1637. The last two were feeble from infancy. Consumption soon showed itself in Anne, and her short life, passed at Richmond, closed in November, 1640. For her last words, we are indebted to Fuller, who adds: 'This done, the little lamb gave up the ghost.'

The affection and care of the royal parents is well attested. 'Their arrival,' when visiting the nursery, 'was the signal of a general rejoicing.'

In the latter portion of this piece I have ventured, it will be seen, on an ideal treatment. The main facts, and the words of the dear child, are historical:—for the details I appeal to any mother who has suffered similar loss whether they could have been much otherwise.

*Not seeing;* See the *Captive Child*.

*The frost;* It is noticed that death, the *Sarsar-wind* of Southey's *Thalaba*, often occurs at the turn between night and day, when the atmosphere is wont to be at the coldest.

## **p. 100AFTER CHALGROVE FIGHT**

June 18: 1643

Flags crape-smother'd and arms reversed,  
 With one sad volley lay him to rest:  
 Lay him to rest where he may not see  
 This England he loved like a lover accursed  
 By lawlessness masking as liberty,  
 By the despot in Freedom's panoply drest:—  
 Bury him, ere he be made duplicity's tool and slave,  
 Where he cannot see the land that he could not save!  
     Bury him, bury him, bury him  
     With his face downward!

Chalgrove! Name of patriot pain!  
O'er thy fresh fields that summer pass'd  
The brand of war's red furnace blast,  
Till heaven's soft tears wash'd out the blackening stain;—  
Wash'd out and wept;—But could not so restore  
England's gallant son:  
Ere the fray was done  
The stately head bow'd down; shatter'd; his warfare o'er.

Bending to the saddle-bow  
With leaden arm that idle hangs,  
Faint with the lancing torture-pangs,  
He drops the rein; he lets the battle go:—  
There, where the wife of his first love he woo'd  
Turning for retreat;—  
Memories bitter-sweet  
Through death's fast-rising mist in youth's own light renew'd.

Then, as those who drown, perchance,  
And all their years, a waking dream,  
Flash pictured by in lightning gleam,  
His childhood home appears, the mother's glance,  
p. 101The hearth-side smile; the fragrance of the fields:  
—Now, war's iron knell  
Wakes the hounds of hell,  
Whilst o'er the realm her scourge the rushing Fury wields!

Doth he now the day lament  
When those who stemm'd despotic might  
O'erstrode the bounds of law and right,  
And through the land the torch of ruin sent?  
Or that great rival statesman as he stood  
Lion-faced and grim,  
Hath he sight of him,  
Strafford—the meteor-axe—the fateful Hill of Blood?

—Heroes both! by passion led,  
In days perplex'd 'tween new and old,  
Each at his will the realm to mould;  
This, basing sovereignty on the single head,  
This, on the many voices of the Hall:—  
Each for his own creed  
Prompt to die at need:  
His side of England's shield each saw, and took for all.

Heroes both! For Order one  
And one for Freedom dying!—We  
May judge more justly both, than ye  
Could, each, his brother, ere the strife was done!  
—O Goddess of that even scale and weight,  
In whose awful eyes  
Truest mercy lies,  
This hero-dirge to thee I vow and dedicate!

—Slanting now,—the foe is by,—  
Through Hazeley mead the warrior goes,  
And hardly fords the brook that flows  
Bearing to Thame its cool, sweet, summer-cry.  
Here take thy rest; here bind the broken heart!  
p. 102By death's mercy-doom

Hid from ills to come,  
Great soul, and greatly vex'd, Hampden!—in peace depart!

In the heart of the fields he loved and the hills,  
Look your last, and lay him to rest,  
With the faded flower, the wither'd grass;  
Where the blood-face of war and the myriad ills  
Of England dear like phantoms pass  
And touch not the soul that is with the Blest.  
Bury him in the night and peace of the holy grave,  
Where he cannot see the land that he could not save!  
Bury him, bury him, bury him  
With his face downward!

John Hampden met his death at Chalgrove in an attempt to check the raids which Prince Rupert was making from Oxford. Struck at the onset in the shoulder by two carabine balls, he rode off before the action was ended by Hazeley towards Thame, finding it impossible to reach Pyrton, the home of his father-in-law. The body was carried to his own house amid the woods and hills of the Chiltern country, and buried in the church close by.

*With his face downward;* This was the dying request of some high-minded Spaniard of old, unwilling, even in the grave, as it were, to look on the misfortunes of his country.

*O'erstrode the bounds;* 'After every allowance has been made,' says Hallam, speaking of the Long Parliament from a date so early as August, 1641, 'he must bring very heated passions to the records of those times, who does not perceive in the conduct of that body a series of glaring violations, not only of positive and constitutional, but of those higher principles which are paramount to all immediate policy': (*Const. Hist.* ch. ix).

*The axe;* A clear and impartial sketch of Stafford's trial will be found in Ranke (B. viii): who deals dispassionately and historically with an event much obscured by declamation in popular narratives. Even in Hallam's hand the balance seems here to waver a little.

*Heroes both;—Each his side;* See Appendix B.

## **p. 103A CHURCHYARD IN OXFORDSHIRE**

September: 1643

Sweet air and fresh; glades yet unsear'd by hand  
Of Midas-finger'd Autumn, massy-green;  
Bird-haunted nooks between,  
Where feathery ferns, a fairy palmglove, stand,  
An English-Eastern band:—  
While e'en the stealthy squirrel o'er the grass  
Beside me to the beech-clump dares to pass:—  
In this still precinct of the happy dead,  
The sanctuary of silence,—Blessed they!  
I cried, who 'neath the gray  
Peace of God's house, each in his mounded bed  
Sleep safe, nor reck how the great world runs on;  
Peasant with noble here alike unknown.

Unknown, unnamed beneath one turf they sleep,  
Beneath one sky, one heaven-uplifted sign  
Of love assured, divine:  
While o'er each mound the quiet mosses creep,  
The silent dew-pearls weep:  
—Fit haven-home for thee, O gentlest heart  
Of Falkland! all unmeet to find thy part  
In those tempestuous times of canker'd hate  
When Wisdom's finest touch, and, by her side,

Forbearance generous-eyed  
To fix the delicate balance of the State  
Were needed;—King or Nation, which should hold  
Supreme supremacy o’er the kingdoms old.

—God’s heroes, who? . . . Not most, or likeliest, he  
Whom iron will cramps to one narrow road,  
Driving him like a goad  
Till all his heart decrees seem God’s decree;  
p. 104That worst hypocrisy  
When self cheats self, and conscience at the wheel  
Herself is steer’d by passion’s blindfold zeal;  
A nether-world archangel! Through whose eyes  
Flame the red mandates of remorseless might;  
A gloom of lurid light  
That holds no commerce with the crystal skies;  
Like those rank fires that o’er the fen-land flee,  
Or on the mast-head sign the wrath to be.

As o’er that ancient weird Arlesian plain  
Where Zeus hail’d boulder-stones on the giant crew,  
And changed to stone, or slew,  
No bud may burgeon in Spring’s gracious rain,  
No blade of grass or grain:  
—So bare, so scourged, a prey to chaos cast  
The wisest despot leaves his realm at last!  
Though for the land he toil’d with iron will,  
Earnest to reach persuasion’s goal through power,  
The fruit without the flower!  
And pray’d and wrestled to charm good from ill;  
Waking perchance, or not, in death,—to find  
Man fights a losing fight who fights mankind!

And as who in the Theban avenue,  
Sphinx ranged by Sphinx, goes awestruck, nor may read  
That ancient awful creed  
Closed in their granite calm:—so dim the clue,  
So tangled, tracking through  
That labyrinthine soul which, day by day  
Changing, yet kept one long imperious way:  
Strong in his weakness; confident, yet forlorn;  
Waning and waxing; diamond-keen, or dull,  
As that star Wonderful,  
Mira, for ever, dying and reborn:—  
Blissful or baleful, yet a Power throughout,  
Throned in dim altitude o’er the common rout.

p. 105Alas, great Chief! The pity of it!—For he  
Lay on his unlamented bier; his life  
Wreck’d on that futile strife  
To wed things alien by heaven’s decree,  
Sword-sway with liberty:—  
Coercing, not protecting;—for the Cause  
Smiting with iron heel on England’s laws:  
—Intolerant tolerance! Soul that could not trust  
Its finer instincts; self-compell’d to run  
The blood-path once begun,  
And murder mercy with a sad ‘I must!’  
Great lion-heart by guile and coarseness marr’d;  
By his own heat a hero warp’d and scarr’d.

Despot despite himself!—And when the cry  
Moan'd up from England, dungeon'd in that drear  
Sectarian atmosphere,  
With glory he gilt her chains; in Spanish sky  
Flaunting the Red Cross high;—  
Wars, just or unjust, ill or well design'd,  
Urged with the will that masters weak mankind.  
—God's hammer Thou!—not hero!—Forged to break  
The land,—salve wounds with wounds, heal force by force;  
Sword-surgeon keen and coarse:—  
To all who worship power for power's own sake,—  
Strength for itself,—Success, the vulgar test,—  
Fit idol of bent knee, and servile breast!

—O in the party plaudits of the crowd  
Glorious, if this be glory!—o'er that shout  
A small still voice breathes out  
With subtle sweetness silencing the loud  
Hoarse vaunting of the proud,—  
A song of exaltation for the vale,  
And how the mountain from his height shall fail!  
How God's true heroes, since this earth began,  
p. 106Go sackcloth-clad through scourge and sword and scorn,  
Crown'd with the bleeding thorn,  
Down-trampled by man's heel as foes to man,  
And whispering *Eli, Eli!* as they die,—  
Martyrs of truth and Saint Humility.

These conquer in their fall: Persuasion flies  
Wing'd, from their grave: The hearts of men are turn'd  
To worship what they burn'd:  
Owning the sway of Love's long-suffering eyes,  
Love's sweet self-sacrifice;  
The might of gentleness; the subduing force  
Of wisdom on her mid-way measured course  
Gliding;—not torrent-like with fury spilt,  
Impetuous, o'er Himalah's rifted side,  
To ravage blind and wide,  
And leave a lifeless wreck of parching silt;—  
Gliding by thorpe and tower and grange and lea  
In tranquil transit to the eternal sea.

—Children of Light!—If, in the slow-paced course  
Of vital change, your work seem incomplete,  
Your conquest-hour defeat,  
Won by mild compromise, by the invisible force  
That owns no earthly source;  
Yet to all time your gifts to man endure,  
God being with you, and the victory sure!  
For though o'er Gods the Giants in the course  
May lord it, Strength o'er Beauty; yet the Soul  
Immortal, clasps the goal;  
Fair Wisdom triumphs by her inborn force:  
—Thus far on earth! . . . But, ah!—from mortal sight  
The crowning glory veils itself in light!

### *Envoy*

—Seal'd of that holy band,  
Rest here, beneath the foot-fall hushing sod,

p. 107 Wrapt in the peace of God,  
 While summer burns above thee; while the land  
 Disrobes; till pitying snow  
 Cover her bareness; till fresh Spring-winds blow,  
 And the sun-circle rounds itself again:—  
 Whilst England cries in vain  
 For thy wise temperance, Lucius!—But thine ear  
 The violent-impotent fever-restless cry,  
 The faction-yells of triumph, will not hear:  
 —Only the thrush on high  
 And wood-dove's moaning sweetness make reply.

Lucius Cary, second Viscount Falkland, may perhaps be defined as at once the most poetically chivalrous and the most philosophically moderate amongst all who took part in the pre-restoration struggles. He was killed in the royal army at the first battle of Newbury, Sep. 20, 1643, aged but 33 years, and buried, without mark or memorial, in the church of Great Tew (North Oxfordshire), the manor of which he owned.

*English Eastern*; The common brake-fern and its allies seem to betray tropical sympathies by their late appearance and sensitiveness to autumnal frost.

*That Arlesian plain*; Now named the *Crau*. It lies between Aries and the sea—a bare and malarious tract of great size covered with shingle and boulders. Aeschylus describes it as a 'snow-shower of round stones,' which Zeus rained down in aid of Heracles, who was contending with the Ligurians.

*Mira*; A star in the *Whale*, conspicuous for its singular and rapid changes of apparent size.

*The Cause*; After passing through several phases this word, in Cromwell's mouth, with the common logic of tyranny, became simply a synonym for personal rule.

*Smiting with iron heel*; The terrorism of the Protector's government, and the almost universal hatred which it inspired, are powerfully painted by Hallam. 'To govern according to law may sometimes be an usurper's wish, but can seldom be in his power. The protector abandoned all thought of it. . . . All illusion was now (1655) gone, as to the pretended benefits of the civil war. It had ended in a despotism, compared to which all the illegal practices of former kings, all that had cost Charles his life and crown, appeared as dust in the balance.'

p. 108 *The blood-path*; The trials under which Gerard and Vowel were executed in 1654, Slingsby and Hewit in 1658, are the most flagrant instances of Cromwell's perversion of justice, and contempt for the old liberties of England. But they do not stand alone.

*Guile and coarseness*; 'A certain coarse good nature and affability that covered the want of conscience, honour, and humanity: quick in passion, but not vindictive, and averse to unnecessary crimes,' is the deliberate summing-up of Hallam,—in the love of liberty inferior to none of our historians, and eminent above all for courageous impartiality,—*iustissimus unus*.

*With glory he gild*; See Appendix C.

*Success, the vulgar test*; See Matthew Arnold's finely discriminative *Essay on Falkland*.

## MARSTON MOOR

July 2: 1644

O, summer-high that day the sun  
 His chariot drove o'er Marston wold:  
 A rippling sea of amber wheat  
 That floods the moorland vale with gold.

With harvest light the valley laughs,  
 The sheaves in mellow sunshine sleep;  
 —Too rathe the crop, too red the swathes  
 Ere night the scythe of Death shall reap!

Then thick and fast o’er all the moor  
The crimson’d sabre-lightnings fly;  
And thick and fast the death-bolts dash,  
And thunder-peals to peals reply.

Where Evening arched her fiery dome  
Went up the roar of mortal foes:—  
Then o’er a deathly peace the moon  
In silver silence sailing rose.

p. 109 Sweet hour, when heaven is nearest home,  
And children’s kisses close the day!  
O disaccord with nature’s calm,  
Unholy requiem of the fray!

White maiden Queen that sail’st above,  
Thy dew-tears on the fallen fling,—  
The blighted wreaths of civil strife,  
The war that can no triumph bring!

—O pale with that deep pain of those  
Who cannot save, yet must foresee,—  
Surveying all the ills to flow  
From that too-victor victory;

When ’gainst the unwisely guided King  
The dark self-centred Captain stood,  
And law and right and peace went down  
In that red sea of brothers’ blood;—

O long, long, long the years, fair Maid,  
Before thy patient eye shall view  
The shrine of England’s law restored,  
Her homes their native peace renew!

*That day*; The actual fight lay between 7 and 9 p.m.

*Too-victor victory*; At Naseby, says Hallam,—and the remark, (though Charles was not personally present), is equally true of Marston Moor—‘Fairfax and Cromwell triumphed, not only over the king and the monarchy, but over the parliament and the nation.’

*Unwisely guided*; ‘Never would it have been wiser, in Rupert,’ remarks Ranke, ‘to avoid a decisive battle than at that moment. But he held that the king’s letter not only empowered, but instructed him to fight.’

*Red sea*; ‘The slaughter was deadly, for Cromwell had forbidden quarter being given’: (Ranke, ix: 3).

**p. 110 THE FUGITIVE KING**

August 7: 1645

Cold blue cloud on the hill-tops,  
Cold buffets of hill-side rain:—  
As a bird that they hunt on the mountains,  
The king, he turns from Rhôs lane:  
A writing of doom on his forehead,  
His eyes wan-wistful and dim;  
For his comrades seeking a shelter:  
But earth has no shelter for him!

Gray silvery gleam of armour,  
White ghost of a wandering king!



No sound but the iron-shod footfall  
And the bridle-chains as they ring:  
Save where the tears of heaven,  
Shed thick o'er the loyal hills,  
Rush down in the hoarse-tongued torrent,  
A roar of approaching ills.

But now with a sweeping curtain,  
In solid wall comes the rain,  
And the troop draw bridle and hide them  
In the bush by the stream-side plain.  
King Charles smiled sadly and gently;  
'Tis the Beggar's Bush,' said he;  
'For I of England am beggar'd,  
And her poorest may pity me.'

—O safe in the fadeless fir-tree  
The squirrel may nestle and hide;  
And in God's own dwelling the sparrow  
Safe with her nestlings abide:—  
But he goes homeless and friendless,  
p. 111And manlike abides his doom;  
For he knows a king has no refuge  
Betwixt the throne and the tomb.

And the purple-robed braes of Alban,  
The glory of stream and of plain,  
The Holyrood halls of his birthright  
Charles ne'er will look on again:—  
And the land he loved well, not wisely,  
Will almost grudge him a grave:  
Then weep, too late, in her folly,  
The dark Dictator's slave!

This incident occurred during the attempt made by Charles, in the dark final days of his struggle, to march from South Wales with the hope of joining Montrose in Scotland. He appears to have halted for the night of Aug. 6, 1645, at Old Radnor and 'the name of *Rails Yat*, (Royal gate) still points out the spot where, on the following morning, he left the Rhôs Lane for the road which brought him to shelter at Beggar's Bush': a name which is reported to be still preserved.

## THE CAPTIVE CHILD

September 8: 1650

Child in girlhood's early grace,  
Pale white rose of royal race,  
Flower of France, and England's flower,  
What dost here at twilight hour  
Captive bird in castle-hold,  
Picture-fair and calm and cold,  
Cold and still as marble stone  
In gray Carisbrook alone?  
—Fold thy limbs and take thy rest,  
Nestling of the silent nest!

p. 112Ah fair girl! So still and meek,  
One wan hand beneath her cheek,  
One on the holy texts that tell  
Of God's love ineffable;—  
Last dear gift her father gave  
When, before to-morrow's grave,

By no unmanly grief unmann'd,  
To his little orphan band  
In that stress of anguish sore  
He bade farewell evermore.

Doom'd, unhappy King! Had he  
Known the pangs in store for thee,  
Known the coarse fanatic rage  
That,—despite her flower-soft age,  
Maidenhood's first blooming fair,—  
Fever-struck in the imprison'd air  
As rosebud on the dust-hill thrown  
Cast a child to die alone,—  
He had shed, with his last breath,  
Bitterer tears than tears of death!

As in her infant hour she took  
In her hand the pictured book  
Where Christ beneath the scourger bow'd,  
Crying 'O poor man!' aloud,  
And in baby tender pain  
Kiss'd the page, and kiss'd again,  
While the happy father smiled  
On his sweet warm-hearted child;  
—So now to him, in Carisbrook lone,  
All her tenderness has flown.

Oft with a child's faithful heart  
She has seen him act his part;  
Nothing in his life so well  
Gracing him as when he fell;  
p. 113  
Seen him greet his bitter doom  
As the mercy-message Home;  
Seen the scaffold and the shame,  
The red shower that fell like flame;  
Till the whole heart within her died,  
Dying in fancy by his side.

—Statue-still and statue-fair  
Now the low wind may lift her hair,  
Motionless in lip and limb;  
E'en the fearful mouse may skim  
O'er the window-sill, nor stir  
From the crumb at sight of her;  
Through the lattice unheard float  
Summer blackbird's evening note;—  
E'en the sullen foe would bless  
That pale utter gentleness.

—Eyes of heaven, that pass and peep,  
Do not question, if she sleep!  
She has no abiding here,  
She is past the starry sphere;  
Kneeling with the children sweet  
At the palm-wreathed altar's feet;  
—Innocents who died like thee,  
Heaven-ward through man's cruelty,  
To the love-smiles of their Lord  
Borne through pain and fire and sword.

Elizabeth, second daughter of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, was born on Innocents' Day, 1635. The incident accounted in Stanza iv occurred in 1637. She had been taken on a visit to Hampton Court to her mother, who wished her to be present at her own vesper-service, when Elizabeth, not yet two years old, became very restless. To quiet her a book of devotion was shown to her.' The King, when the Queen drew his attention, said, 'She begins young!'

This tale is told by Mrs. Green, in her excellent *Princesses of England*, (London, 1853),—a book deserving to be better known,—on the authority of the Envoy Con.

p. 114The first grief of a very happy and promising childhood may have been the loss of her sister Anne in 1640. But by 1642, the evils of the time began to press upon Princess Elizabeth; her mother's departure from England, followed by her own capture by order of the Parliament; her confinement under conditions of varying severity; and the final farewell to her father, Jan. 29, 1649.

From that time her life was overshadowed by the sadness of her father's death, her own isolation, and her increasing feebleness of health. She seems to have been a singularly winning and intelligent girl, and she hence found or inspired affection in several of the guardians successively appointed to take charge of her. But if she had not been thus marked by beauty of nature, our indignant disgust would hardly be less at the brutal treatment inflicted by the Puritan-Independent authorities upon this child:—at the refusal of her prayer to be sent to her elder sister Mary, in Holland; at the captivity in Carisbrook; at the isolation in which she was left to die.—Yet it is not she who most merits pity!

In this poem, written before the plan of the book had been formed, I find that some slight deviation from the best authorities has been made. Elizabeth's young brother Henry, Duke of Gloster, shared her prison: and although her own physician, Mayerne, had been dismissed, yet some medical attendance was supplied.—Henry Vaughan has described the patience of the young sufferer in two lovely lines:

Thou didst not murmur, nor revile,  
And drank'st thy wormwood with a smile.

—*Olor Iscanus*; 1651.

# THE WRECK OF THE ADMIRAL

## A TALE OF PRINCE RUPERT

September 30: 1651

Seventy league from Terceira they lay  
In the mid Atlantic straining;  
And inch upon inch as she settles they know  
The leak on the Admiral gaining.

Below them 'tis death rushes greedily in;  
But their signal unheeded is waving,  
p. 115For the shouts by their billow-toss'd consort unheard  
Are lost in the tempest's wild raving.

For Maurice in vain o'er the bulwark leant forth,  
While Rupert to rescue was crying;  
And the voice of farewell on his face is flung back  
With the scud on the billow-top flying!

But no time was for tears, save for duty no thought,  
When brother is parting from brother;  
For Rupert the brave and his high-hearted crew,  
They must die, as they lived, by each other.

Unregarded the boat, for none care from their post  
To steal off while the Prince is beside them,  
All, all, side by side with his comrades to share  
Till the death-plunge at last shall divide them.

Ah, sharp in his bosom meanwhile is the smart,  
He alone for his king is contending!  
And the brightness and blaze of his youth in its prime  
Must here in mid-waves have their ending!

—The seas they break over, the seas they press in  
From fo’csle to binnacle streaming;  
And a ripple runs over the Admiral’s deck,  
With blue cold witch-fire gleaming.

O then in a noble rebellion they rise;  
They may die, but the Prince shall o’erlive them!  
With a loving rough force to the boat he is thrust,  
And he must be saved and forgive them!

Now their flame-pikes they lift, the last signal for life,  
Flaring wild in the wild rack above them:—  
And each breast has one prayer for the Mercy on high,  
And one for the far-off who love them.

p. 116O high-beating hearts that are still’d in the deep  
Unknown treasure-caverns of Ocean!  
There, where storms cannot vex, the three hundred are laid  
In their silent heroic devotion.

Rupert, nephew to Charles through his sister Elizabeth, wife to the Elector Palatine, after the ruin of his uncle’s cause, carried on the struggle at sea. The incident here treated occurred on one of his last voyages, when cruising in the Atlantic near the Canaries: it is told at full length in E. Warburton’s narrative of Rupert’s life.

*Brother is parting from brother*; Maurice, a year younger than himself,—then in the companion ship *Swallow*, in which Rupert, by the devoted determination of his comrades, was ultimately saved. Maurice was not long after drowned in the West Indies.

*Flame-pikes*; Two ‘fire-pikes,’ it is stated, were burned as a signal just before the flag-ship sank. Three hundred and thirty-three was the estimate of the number drowned.

## THE RETURN OF LAW

1660

At last the long darkness of anarchy lifts, and the dawn o’er the gray  
In rosy pulsation floods; the tremulous amber of day:  
In the golden umbrage of spring-tide, the dewy delight of the sward,  
The liquid voices awake, the new morn with music reward.  
Peace in her car goes up; a rainbow curves for her road;  
Law and fair Order before her, the reinless coursers of God;—  
Round her the gracious maids in circling majesty shine;  
They are rich in blossoms and blessings, the Hours, the white, the divine!

p. 117Hands in sisterly hands they unite, eye calling on eye;  
Smiles more speaking than words, as the pageant sweeps o’er the sky.  
Plenty is with them, and Commerce; all gifts of all lands from her horn  
Raining on England profuse; and, clad in the beams of the morn,  
Her warrior-guardian of old the red standard rears in its might;  
And the Love-star trembles above, and passes, light into light.

Many the marvels of earth, the more marvellous wonders on high,  
Worlds past number on worlds, blank lightless abysses of sky;  
But thou art the wonder of wonders, O Man! Thy impalpable soul,  
Atom of consciousness, measuring the Infinite, grasping the whole:

Then, on the triviallest transiencies fix'd, or plucking for fruit  
Dead-sea apples and ashes of sin, more brute than the brute.  
Yet in thy deepest depths, filth-wallowing orgies of night,  
Lust remorseless of blood, yet, allow'd an inlet for light:  
As where, a thousand fathom beneath us, midnight afar  
Glooms in some gulph, and we gaze, and, behold! one flash of one star!  
For, ever, the golden gates stand open, the transit is free  
For the human to mix with divine; from himself to the Highest to flee.  
Lo on its knees by the bedside the babe:—and the song that we hear  
Has been heard already in Heaven! the low-lisp'd music is clear:—  
For, fresh from the hand of the Maker, the child still breathes the light air  
p. 118Of the House Angelic, the meadow where souls yet unbodied repair,  
Lucid with love, translucent with bliss, and know not the doom  
In the Marah valley of life laid up for the sons of the womb.  
—I speak not of grovelling hearts, souls blind and begrimed from the birth,  
But the spirits of nobler strain, the elect of the children of earth:—  
For the needle swerves from the pole; they cannot do what they would;  
In their truest aim is falsehood, and ill out-balancing good.  
Faith's first felicities fade; the world-mists thicken and roll,  
'Neath the heavens arching their heaven; o'er-hazing the eye of the soul.  
Then the vision is pure no longer; refracted above us arise  
The phantasmal figures of passion; earth's mirage exhaled to the skies.  
And they go as the castled clouds o'er the verge when the tempest is laid,  
Towering Ambition, and Glory, and Self as Duty array'd:—  
Idols no less than that idol whom lustful Ammon of yore  
With the death-scream of children, a furnace of blood, was fain to adore!  
So these, in the shrine of the soul, for a Moloch sacrifice cry,  
The conscience of candid childhood, the pure directness of eye:—  
Till the man yields himself to himself, accepting his will as his fate,  
And the light from above within him is darkness; the darkness how great!

O Land whom the Gods,—loving most,—most sorely in wisdom have tried,  
England! since Time was Time, thrice swept by the conqueror tide,  
p. 119Why on thyself thrice turn, thrice crimson thy greenness in gore,  
With the slain of thy children, as sheep, thy meadows whitening-o'er?  
Race impatiently patient; tenacious of foe as of friend;  
Slow to take flame; but, enflamed, that burns thyself out to the end:  
Slow to return to the balance, once moved; not easily sway'd  
From the centre, and, star-like, retracing thy orbit through sunlight and shade!  
—Without hate, without party affection, we now look back on the fray,  
Through the mellowing magic of time the phantoms emerging to day!  
Grasping too much for self, unjust to his rival in strife,  
Each foe with good conscience and honour advances; war to the knife!  
Lo, where with feebler hand the Stuart essays him to guide  
The disdainful coursers of Henry, the Tudor car in its pride!  
For he saw not the past was past; nor the swirl and inrush of the tide,  
A nation arising in manhood; its will would no more be denied.  
They would share in the labour and peril of State; they must perish or win;  
'Tis the instinct of Freedom that cries; a voice of Nature within!  
Narrow the cry and sectarian oft: true sons of their age;  
Justice avenged unjustly; yet more in sorrow than rage;  
Till they drank the poison of power, the Circé-cup of command,  
And the face of Liberty fail'd, and the sword was snatch'd from her hand.  
Now Law 'neath the scaffold cowers, and,—shame engendering shame,—  
p. 120The hell-pack of war is laid close on the land for ruin and flame.  
For as things most holy are worst, from holiness when they decline,  
So Law, in the name of law once outraged, demon-divine,  
Swoops back as Anarchy arm'd, and maddens her lovers of yore,  
Changed from their former selves, and clothed in the chrisom of gore.

Then Falkland and Hampden are gone; and darker counsels arise;  
 Vane with his tortuous soul, through over-wisdom unwise;  
 Pym, deep stately designer, the subtle in simple disguised,  
 Artist in plots, projector of panics he used, and despised!  
 —But as, in the mountain world, where the giants each lift up their horn  
 To the skies defiant and pale, and our littleness measure and scorn,  
 Frowning-out from their far-off summits: and eye and mind may not know  
 Which is hugest, where all are huge: But, as from the region we go  
 Receding, the Titan of Titans comes forth, and above him the sky  
 Is deepest: and lo!—’tis the White One, the Monarch!—He mounts, as we fly!  
 Or as over the sea the gay ships and the dolphins glisten and flit,  
 And then that Leviathan comes, and takes his pastime in it;  
 And wherever he ploughs his dark road, they must sink or follow him still,  
 For his is the bulkiest strength, the proud and paramount will!  
 —Thou wast great, O King! (for we grudge not the style thou didst yearn-for in vain,  
 But a river of blood was between and an ineffaceable stain),  
 p. 121 Great with an earth-born greatness; a Titan of awe, not of love;  
 ’Twas strength and subtlety balanced; the wisdom not from above.  
 For he leant o’er his own deep soul, oracular; over the pit  
 As the Pythia throned her of old, where the rock in Delphi was split;  
 And the vapour and echo within he mis-held for divine; and the land  
 Heard and obey’d, unwillingly willing, the voice of command.  
 —Soaring enormous soul, that to height o’er the highest aspires;  
 All that the man can seize being nought to what he desires!  
 And as, in a palace nurtured, the child to courtesy grows,  
 Becoming at last what it acts; so man on himself can impose,  
 Drill and accustom himself to humility, till, like an art,  
 The lesson the fingers have learn’d appears the command of the heart;  
 Whilst pride, as the snake at the charmer’s command, coils low in its place,  
 And he wears to himself and his fellows the mask that is almost a face.  
 Truest of hypocrites, he!—in himself entangled, he thinks  
 Earth uprising to Heaven, while earth-ward the heavenly sinks:  
 Conscience, we grant it, his guide; but conscience drugg’d and deceived;  
 Conscience which all that his self-belief whisper’d as duty believed.  
 And though he sought earnest for God, in life-long wrestle and prayer,  
 Yet the sky by a veil was darken’d, a phantom flitting in air;  
 For a cloud from that seething cavernous heart fumed out in his youth,  
 p. 122 And whatever he will’d in the strength of the soul was imaged as truth:—  
 Grew with his growth: And now ’tis Ambition, disguised in success;  
 And he walks with the step assured, that cares not its issue to guess,  
 Clear in immediate purpose: and moulding his party at will,  
 He thrones it o’er obstinate sects, his ideal constrain’d to fulfil.  
 Cool in his very heat, self-master, he masters the realm:  
 God and His glory the flag; but King Oliver lord of the helm!  
 As he needs, steers crooked or straight: with his eye controlling the proud,  
 While blandness runs from his tongue, as the candidate fawns on the crowd;  
 Sagest of Titans, he stands; dark, ponderous, muddy-profound,  
 Greatness untemper’d, untuned; no song, but a chaos of sound:—  
 Yet the key-note is ever beneath: ‘Mere humble instruments! See!  
 Poor weak saints, at the best: but who has triumph’d as we?’  
 Thanks the Lord for each massacre-mercy, His glory, for His is the Cause:  
 Catlike he bridles, and purrs about God: but within are the claws,  
 The lion-strength is within!—Vane, Ludlow, Hutchinson, knew,  
 When the bauble of Law disappear’d, and the sulky senate withdrew:  
 When the tyrannous Ten sword-silenced the land, and the necks of the strong  
 By the heel of their great Dictator were bruised, wrong trampling on wrong.  
 p. 123 Least willing of despots! and fain the fair temple of Law to restore,  
 Sheathing the sword in the sceptre: But lo! as in legends of yore,  
 Once drawn, once redden’d, it may not return to the scabbard!—and straight

On that iron-track'd path he had framed to the end he is goaded by Fate.  
And yet, as a temperate man, to flavour some exquisite dish,  
Without stint pours forth the red wine, thus only can compass his wish;  
Upon Erin the death-mark he brands, the Party and Cause to secure;  
Not bloodthirsty by birth; just, liquor 'twas needful to pour;  
Only the wine of man's blood! . . . But the horrible sacrament thrill'd  
Right through the heart of a nation; nor yet is the memory still'd;  
E'en yet the dim spectre returns, the ghost of the murderous years,  
Blood flushing out in hatred; or blood transmuted to tears!  
—Ah strange drama of Fate! what motley pageantries rise  
On the stage of this make-shift world! what irony silenced in sighs!  
For as when the Switzer looks down on the dell, from the pass and the snow,  
Sees the peace of the fields, the white farms, the clear equable streamlet below,  
And before him the world unknown, the blaze of the shadowless Line,  
Riches ill-purchased in exile, the toiling plantation and mine;  
And the horn floats up the faint music of youth from his forefathers' fold,  
And he sighs for the patient life, the peace more golden than gold:—  
p. 124 So He now looks back on the years, and groans 'neath the load he must bear,  
Loving this England that loathed him, and none the burden to share!  
Gagging not gaining souls: to the close he wonders in vain  
Why he cannot win hearts: why 'tis only the will that resigns to his reign.  
As that great image in Dura, the land perforce must obey,  
Unloved, unlovely,—and not the feet only of iron and clay,—  
Atlas of this wide realm! in himself he summ'd up the whole;  
Its children the Cause had devour'd: the sword was childless and sole.

—Ah strange drama of Fate! what motley pageantries rise  
On the stage of this make-shift world! what irony silenced in sighs!  
In the strait beneath Etna for as the waves ebb, and Scylla betrays  
The monster below, foul scales of the serpent and slime,—could we gaze  
On Tyranny stript of her tinsel, what vision of dool and dismay!  
Terror in confidence clothed, and anarchy bidding her day:  
Selfishness hero-mask'd; stage-tricks of the shabby-sublime;  
Impotent gaspings at good; and the deluge after her time!

—Is it war that thunders o'er England, and bursts the millennial oak  
From his base like a castle uprooted, and shears with impalpable stroke  
The sails from the ocean, the houses of men, while the Conqueror lay  
On the morn of his crowning mercy, and life flicker'd down with the day?  
Is it war on the earth, or war in the skies, or Nature who tolls  
p. 125 Her passing-bell as from earth they go up, her imperial souls?  
—He rests:—'Tis a lion-sleep: and the sternness of Truth is reproved:  
The sleep of a leader of men; unhuman, to watch him unmoved!  
In the stillness of pity and awe we remember his troublesome years,  
For man is the magnet to man, and mortal failure has tears.  
—He rests:—On the massive brows, as a rock by the sunrise is crown'd,  
His passionate love for the land, in a glory-coronal bound!  
And Mercy dawns fast o'er the dead, from the bier as we turn and depart,  
England for England's sake clasp'd firm as a child to his heart.  
—He rests:—And the storm-clouds have fled, and the sunshine of Nature repress'd  
Breaks o'er the realm in smiles, and the land again has her rest.  
He rests: the great spirit is hid where from heaven the veil is unroll'd,  
And justice merges in love, and the dross is purged from the gold.

The general point of view from which this subject is here approached is given in the following passages:—‘The whole nation,’ says Macaulay (1659), ‘was sick of government by the sword, and pined for government by the law.’ Hence, when Charles landed, ‘the cliffs of Dover were covered by thousands of gazers, among whom scarcely one could be found who was not weeping with delight . . . Every where flags were flying, bells and music sounding, wine and ale flowing in rivers to the health of him whose return was the return of peace, of law, and of freedom.’ Nor was this

astounding: the name of the Commonwealth, a greater than Macaulay remarks, ‘was grown infinitely odious: it was associated with the tyranny of ten years, the selfish rapacity of the Rump, the hypocritical despotism of Cromwell, the arbitrary sequestrations of committee-men, the iniquitous decimations of p. 126military prefects, the sale of British citizens for slavery in the West Indies, the blood of some shed on the scaffold without legal trial, . . . the persecution of the Anglican Church, the bacchanalian rant of sectaries, the morose preciseness of puritans . . . It is universally acknowledged that no measure was ever more national, or has ever produced more testimonies of public approbation, than the restoration of Charles II. . . . For the late government, whether under the parliament or the protector, had never obtained the sanction of popular consent, nor could have subsisted for a day without the support of the army. The King’s return seemed to the people the harbinger of a real liberty, instead of that bastard Commonwealth which had insulted them with its name’ (Hallam: *Const. Hist.* ch. x and xi).

*Peace in her car*; It will be seen that the Rospigliosi *Aurora*, Guido’s one inspired work, has been here before the writer’s memory.

*On thyself thrice turn*; The civil wars of the Barons, the Roses, and the Commonwealth.

*He saw not*; Ranke’s dispassionate summary of the attempted ‘arrest of five members,’ which has been always held one of the King’s most arbitrary steps, as it was, perhaps, the most fatal, illustrates the view here taken: ‘The prerogative of the Crown, *in the sense of the early kings*’ (unconditional right of arrest, in cases of treason), ‘and the privilege of Parliament, *in the sense of coming times*, were directly contradictory to each other’: (viii: 10).

*Till they drank the poison*; A sentence weighty with his judicial force may be here quoted from Hallam:—‘The desire of obtaining or retaining power, if it be ever sought as a means, is soon converted into an end.’ The career of the Long Parliament supports this judgment: of it ‘it may be said, I think, with not greater severity than truth, that scarce two or three public acts of justice, humanity, or generosity, and very few of political wisdom and courage, are recorded of them from their quarrel with the King to their expulsion by Cromwell’: (*Const. Hist.* ch. x: Part i).

*The chrisom*; Name for the white cloth in which babes were veiled immediately after Baptism.

*Artist in plots*; See Ranke (viii: 5) for Pym’s skilful use of a supposed plot, (the main element in which was known by himself to be untrue), in order to terrify the House and ensure the destruction of Stafford; and Hallam (ch. ix).—Admiration of Pym may be taken as a proof that a historian is ignorant of, or faithless to, the fundamental principles of the Constitution:—as the worship of Cromwell is decisive against any man’s love of liberty, whatever his professions.

*O King*; ‘Cromwell, like so many other usurpers, felt his position p. 127too precarious, or his vanity ungratified, without the name which mankind have agreed to worship.’ The conversations recorded by Whitelock are conclusive on this point: ‘and, though compelled to decline the crown, he undoubtedly did not lose sight of the object for the short remainder of his life’ (Hallam).

*The sky by a veil*; See Appendix D.

*And he walks*; ‘He said on one occasion, *He goes furthest who knows not whither he is going*’: (Ranke: xii: 1).

*Purrs about God*; Examples, (the tone of which justifies this phrase, and might deserve a severer), may be found by the curious in the frailties of poor human nature, *passim*, in Cromwell’s ‘Letters and Speeches,’ for which, (although not always edited with precise accuracy), we are indebted to Mr. T. Carlyle. But the view which he takes of his ‘hero,’ whether in regard of many particular facts alleged or neglected, or of the general estimate of Cromwell as a man,—as it appears to the author plainly untenable in face of proved historical facts, is here rejected.

The familiar figure of the Tyrant, too long known to the world,—with the iron, the clay, and the little gold often interfused also in the statue,—has been always easily recognisable by unbiassed eyes in Oliver Cromwell. His tyranny was substantially that of his kind, before his time and since, in its actions, its spirit, its result. Fanaticism and Paradox may come with their apparatus of rhetoric to blur, as they whitewash, the lineaments of their idol. Such eulogists may ‘paint an inch thick’: yet despots,—political, military, ecclesiastical,—will never be permanently acknowledged by the common sense of mankind as worthy the great name of Hero.

*The tyrannous Ten*; The Major-Generals, originally ten, (but the number varied), amongst whom, in 1655, the Commonwealth was divided. They displayed ‘a rapacity and oppression beyond their master’s’ (Hallam): a phrase amply supported by the hardly-impeachable evidence of Ludlow.

*The horrible sacrament*; See Appendix D.



*Why he cannot win hearts*; ‘In the ascent of this bold usurper to greatness . . . he had encouraged the levellers and persecuted them; he had flattered the Long Parliament and betrayed it; he had made use of the sectaries to crush the Commonwealth; he had spurned the sectaries in his last advance to power. These, with the Royalists and Presbyterians, forming in effect the whole people . . . were the perpetual, irreconcilable enemies of his administration’ (Hallam ch. x).

*Stage-tricks*; See the curious regal imitations and adaptations of the p. 128Protector during his later years, in matters regarding his own and his family’s titles and state, or the marriage of his daughters.

*Mortal failure*; See Appendix D.

**THE POET’S EUTHANASIA**

November: 1674

Cloked in gray threadbare poverty, and blind,  
Age-weak, and desolate, and beloved of God;  
High-heartedness to long repulse resign’d,  
Yet bating not one jot of hope, he trod  
The sunless skyless streets he could not see;  
By those faint feet made sacrosanct to me.

Yet on that laureate brow the sign he wore  
Of Phoebus’ wrath; who,—for his favourite child,  
When war and faction raised their rancorous roar,  
Leagued with fanatic frenzy, blood-defiled,  
To the sweet Muses and himself untrue,—  
Around the head he loved thick darkness threw.

—He goes:—But with him glides the Pleiad throng  
Of that imperial line, whom Phoebus owns  
His ownest: for, since his, no later song  
Has soar’d, as wide-wing’d, to the diadem’d thrones  
That, in their inmost heaven, the Muses high  
Set for the sons of immortality.

Most loved, most lovely, near him as he went,  
Vergil: and He, supremest for all time,  
In hoary blindness:—But the sweet lament  
Of Lesbian love, the Parian song sublime,  
Follow’d:—and that stern Florentine apart  
Cowl’d himself dark in thought, within his heart

p. 129Nursing the dream of Church and Caesar’s State,  
Empire and Faith:—while Fancy’s favourite child,  
The myriad-minded, moving up sedate  
Beckon’d his countryman, and inly smiled:—  
Then that august Theophany paled from view,  
To higher stars drawn up, and kingdoms new.

The last ten years of Milton’s life were passed at his house situate in the (then) ‘Artillery Walk,’ Bunhill, near Aldersgate. He is described as a spare figure, of middle stature or a little less, who walked, generally clothed in a gray camblet overcoat, in the streets between Bunhill and Little Britain.

*Vergil*; placed first as most like Milton in consummate art and permanent exquisiteness of phrase. It is to him, also, (if to any one), that Milton is metrically indebted.—The other poets classed as ‘Imperial’ are Homer, Sappho, Archilochus, Dante, Shakespeare. The supremacy in rank which the writer has here ventured to limit to these seven poets, (though with a strong feeling of diffidence in view of certain other Hellenic and Roman claims), is assigned to Sappho and Archilochus, less on account of the scanty fragments, though they be ‘more golden than gold,’ which have reached us, than in confidence that the place collateral with Homer, given them by their countrymen (who criticized as admirably as they created), was, in fact, justified by their poetry.

*The dream*; Dante’s political wishes and speculations, wholly opposed to Milton’s, are, however, like his in their impracticable originality.

*Theophany*; Vision of the Gods.

**p. 130WHITEHALL GALLERY**

February 11: 1655

As when the King of old  
’Mid Babylonian gold,  
And picture-woven walls, and lamps that gleam’d  
Unholy radiance, sate,  
And with some smooth slave-mate  
Toy’d, and the wine laugh’d round, and music stream’d  
Voluptuous undulation, o’er the hall,—  
Till on the palace-wall

Forth came a hand divine  
And wrote the judgment-sign,  
And Babylon fell!—So now, in that his place  
Of Tudor-Stuart pride,  
The golden gallery wide,  
’Mid venal beauty’s lavish-arm’d embrace,  
And hills of gambler-gold, a godless King  
Moved through the revelling

With quick brown falcon-eye  
And lips of gay reply;  
Wise in the wisdom not from Heaven!—as one  
Who from his exile-days  
Had learn’d to scorn the praise  
Of truth, the crown by martyr-virtue won:  
Below ambition:—Grant him regal ease!  
The rest, as fate may please!

—O royal heir, restored  
Not by the bitter sword,  
But when the heart of these great realms in free,  
Full, triple, unison beat  
The Martyr’s son to greet,  
p. 131Her ancient law and faith and flag with thee  
Rethroned,—not thus!—in this inglorious hall  
Of harem-festival,

Not thus!—For even now,  
The blaze is on thy brow  
Scored by the shadowy hand of him whose wing  
Knows neither haste nor rest;  
Who from the board each guest  
In season calling,—knight and kerne and king,—  
Where Arthur lies, and Alfred, signs the way;—  
—We know him, and obey.

Lord Macaulay’s lively description of this scene (*Hist.* Ch iv) should be referred to. ‘Even then,’ he says, ‘the King had complained that he did not feel well.’

*Tudor-Stuart*; This famous Gallery was of sixteenth-century date.

*When the heart*; The weariness of England under the triple yoke of Puritanism, the Independents, and the Protector, has

been already noticed: (Note on p. 125).

‘The Restoration,’ says Professor Seeley, in an able essay on current perversions of seventeenth-century-history, ‘was not a return to servitude, but the precise contrary. It was a great emancipation, an exodus out of servitude into liberty . . . As to the later Stuarts, I regard them as pupils of Cromwell: . . . it was their great ambition to appropriate his methods,’ (and, we may add, to follow his foreign policy in regard to France and Holland), for the benefit of the old monarchy. They failed where their model had succeeded, and the distinction of having enslaved England remained peculiar to Cromwell.’

## **p. 132THE BALLAD OF KING MONMOUTH**

1685

*Fear not, my child, though the days be dark,  
Never fear, he will come again,  
With the long brown hair, and the banner blue,  
King Monmouth and all his men!*

The summer-smiling bay  
Has doff'd its vernal gray;  
A peacock breast of emerald shot with blue:  
Is it peace or war that lands  
On these pale quiet sands,  
As round the pier the boats run-in their silent crew?

Bent knee, and forehead bare;  
That moment was for prayer!  
Then swords flash out, and—Monmouth!—is the cry:  
The crumbling cliff o'erpast,  
The hazard-die is cast,  
'Tis James 'gainst James in arms! Soho! and Liberty!

*—Fear not, my child, though he come with few;  
Alone will he come again;  
God with him, and his right hand more strong  
Than a thousand thousand men!*

They file by Colway now;  
They rise o'er Uplyme brow;  
And faithful Taunton hails her hero-knight:  
And girlhood's agile hand  
Weaves for the patriot band  
The crown-emblazon'd flag, their gathering star of fight.

—Ah flag of shame and woe!  
For not by these who go,  
Scythe-men and club-men, foot and hunger-worn,  
p. 133These levies raw and rude,  
Can England be subdued,  
Or that ancestral throne from its foundations torn!

Yet by the dour deep trench  
Their mettle did not blench,  
When mist and midnight closed o'er sad Sedgemoor;  
Though on those hearts of oak  
The tall cuirassiers broke,  
And Afric's tiger-bands sprang forth with sullen roar:

Though the loud cannon plane  
Death's lightning-riven lane,

Levelling that unskill'd valour, rude, unled:  
—Yet happier in their fate  
Than whom the war-fiends wait  
To rend them limb from limb, the gibbet-withering dead!

—*Yet weep not, my child, though the dead be dead,  
And the wounded rise not again!  
For they are with God who for England fought,  
And they bore them as Englishmen.*

Stout hearts, and sorely tried!  
—But he, for whom they died,  
Skulk'd like the wolf in Cranborne, torn and gaunt:—  
Till, dragg'd and bound, he knelt  
To one no prayers could melt,  
Nor bond of blood, nor fear of fate, from vengeance daunt.

—O hill of death and gore,  
Fast by the tower'd shore,  
What wealth of precious blood is thine, what tears!  
What calmly fronted scorn;  
What pangs, not vainly borne!  
For heart beats hot with heart, and human grief endears!

p. 134—*Then weep not, my child, though the days be dark;  
Fear not; He will come again,  
With Arthur and Harold and good Saint George,  
King Monmouth and all his men!*

Monmouth's invasion forms one of the most brilliant,—perhaps the most brilliant,—of Lord Macaulay's narratives. But many curious details are added in the *History* by Mr. G Roberts (1844).

The belief, which this poem represents, that 'King Monmouth,' as he was called in the West, would return, lasted long. He landed in Lyme Bay, June 11, 1685, between the Cobb (Harbour-pier) and the beginning of the Ware cliffs: marching north, after a few days, by the road which left the ruins of Colway House on the right and led over Uplyme to Axminster.

*Soho*; the watch-word on Monmouth's side at Sedgemoor; his London house was in the Fields, (now Square), bearing that name.

*Faithful Taunton*; here the Puritan spirit was strong; and here Monmouth was persuaded to take the title of king (June 20), symbolized by the flag which the young girls of Taunton presented to him. It bore a crown with the cypher J B.—Monmouth's own name being James.

*Dour deep trench*; Sedgemoor lies in a marshy district near Bridgewater, much intersected by trenches or 'Rhines.' One, the Busses Rhine, lay between the two armies as they fought, July 6. Monmouth was caught hiding in Cranborne Chase, July 8; executed, after a vain attempt to move the heart of his uncle the king, July 15, on Tower Hill.

*Afric's tiger-bands*; Kirke savage troops from Tangier.

## **p. 135 WILLELMUS VAN NASSAU**

Yes! we confess it! 'mong the sons of Fate,  
Earth's great ones, thou art great!  
As that tall peak which from her silver cone  
Of maiden snow unstain'd  
All but the bravest scares, and reigns alone

In glacier isolation: Thus wert thou,  
With that pale steadfast brow,

Gaunt aquiline: Thy whole life one labouring breath,  
Yet the strong soul untamed;  
France bridled, England saved, thy task ere death!

—O day of triumph, when thy bloodless host  
From Devon’s russet coast  
Through the fair capital of the garden-West,  
And that, whose gracious spire  
Like childhood’s prayer springs heaven-ward unrepress’d,

To Thames march’d legion-like, and at their tread  
The sullen despot fled,  
And Law and Freedom fair,—so late restored,  
And to so-perilous life,  
While Stuart craft replaced the Usurper’s sword,—

Broke forth, as sunshine from the breaking sky,  
When vernal storm-wings fly!  
That day was thine, great Chief, from sea to sea:  
The whole land’s welcome seem’d  
The welcome of one man! a realm by thee

Deliver’d!—But the crowning hour of fame,  
The zenith of a name  
Is ours once only: and he, too just, too stern,  
p. 136Too little Englishman,  
A nation’s gratitude did not care to earn,

On wider aims, not worthier, set:—A soul  
Immured in self-control;  
Saving the thankless in their own despite:—  
Then turning with a gasp  
Of joy, to his own land by native right;

Changing the Hall of Rufus and the Keep  
Of Windsor’s terraced steep  
For Guelderland horizons, silvery-blue;  
The green deer-twinkling glades,  
And long, long, avenues of the stately Loo.

‘William,’ says his all too zealous panegyrist, ‘never became an Englishman. He served England, it is true; but he never loved her, and he never obtained her love. To him she was always a land of exile, visited with reluctance and quitted with delight. . . . Her welfare was not his chief object. Whatever patriotic feeling he had was for Holland. . . . In the gallery of Whitehall he pined for the familiar House in the Wood at the Hague, and never was so happy as when he could quit the magnificence of Windsor for his humbler seat at Loo:’ (Macaulay: *Hist.* ch. vii)

*One labouring breath*; William throughout life was tortured by asthma.

*Demon’s russet coast*; Torbay.—*Capital of the garden-West*; Exeter.—*Gracious spire*; Salisbury.—*Hall of Rufus*; The one originally built by William II at Westminster.

**p. 137THE CHILDLESS MOTHER**

1700-1702

Oft in midnight visions  
Ghostly by my bed  
Stands a Father’s image,  
Pale discrownéd head:—  
—I forsook thee, Father!

Was no child to thee!  
Child-forsaken Mother,  
Now 'tis so with me.

Oft I see the brother,  
Baby born to woe,  
Crouching by the church-wall  
From the bloodhound-foe.  
Evil crown'd of evil,  
Heritage of strife!  
Mine, an heirless sceptre:  
His, an exile life!

—O my vanish'd darlings,  
From the cradle torn!  
Dewdrop lives, that never  
Saw their second morn!  
Buds that fell untimely,—  
Till one blossom grew;  
As I watch'd its beauty,  
Fading whilst it blew.

Thou wert more to me, Love,  
More than words can tell:  
All my remnant sunshine  
Died in one farewell.  
Midnight-mirk before me  
Now my life goes by,  
p. 138For the baby faces  
As in vain I cry.

O the little footsteps  
On the nursery floor!  
Lispings light and laughter  
I shall hear no more!  
Eyes that gleam'd at waking  
Through their silken bars;  
Starlike eyes of children,  
Now beyond the stars!

Where the murder'd Mary  
Waits the rising sign,  
They are laid in darkness,  
Little lambs of mine.  
Only this can comfort:  
Safe from earthly harms  
Christ the Saviour holds them  
In His loving arms:—

Spring eternal round Him,  
Roses ever fair:—  
Will His mercy set them  
All beside me there?  
Will their Angels guide me  
Through the golden gate?  
—Wait a little, children!  
Mother, too, must wait!

*I forsook thee*; Marlborough, desirous to widen the breach between Anne and William III, influenced her to write to her Father, 'supplicating his forgiveness, and professing repentance for the part she had taken.'

Now 'tis so; Anne 'was said to attribute the death of her children to the part she had taken in dethroning her father:' (Lecky, *History of the Eighteenth Century*).

*The brother*; The infant son of James, known afterwards as the 'Old Pretender,' or as James III. He was carried as an infant from the p. 139Palace (Dec. 1688) to Lambeth, where he was in great peril of discovery. The story is picturesquely told by Macaulay.

*One blossom*; The Duke of Gloucester, who grew up to eleven years, dying in July 1700. After his death Anne signed, in private letters, 'your unfortunate' friend.

Anne's character, says the candid Lecky, 'though somewhat peevish and very obstinate, was pure, generous, simple, and affectionate; and she displayed, under bereavements far more numerous than fall to the share of most, a touching piety that endeared her to her people.'

*Where the murder'd Mary*; 'Above and around, in every direction,' says Dean Stanley, describing the vault beneath the monument of Mary of Scotland in Henry the Seventh's Chapel,—'crushing by the accumulated weight of their small coffins the receptacles of the illustrious dust beneath, lie the eighteen children of Queen Anne, dying in infancy or stillborn, ending with William Duke of Gloucester, the last hope of the race:' (*Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, ch. iii).

**BLLENHEIM**

August 13: 1704

Oft hast thou acted thy part,  
My country, worthily thee!  
Lifted up often thy load  
Atlantean, enormous, with glee:—  
For on thee the burden is laid to uphold  
World-justice; to keep the balance of states;  
On thee the long cry of the tyrant-oppress'd,  
The oppress'd in the name of liberty, waits:—  
Ready, aye ready, the blade  
In its day to draw forth, unafraid;  
Thou dost not blench from thy fate!  
By thy high heart, only, secure; by thy magnanimity, great.

E'en so it was on the morn  
When France with Spain, in one realm  
Welded, one thunderbolt, stood,  
With one stroke the world to o'erwhelm.  
p. 140—They have pass'd the great stream, they have stretch'd their white camp  
Above the protecting morass and the dell,  
Blenheim to Lutzingen, where the long wood  
In summer-thick leafage rounds o'er the fell:  
—England! in nine-fold advance  
Cast thy red flood upon France;  
Over marsh over beck ye must go,  
Wholly together! or, Danube to Rhine, all slides to the foe!

As the lava thrusts onward its wall,  
One mass down the valley they tramp;  
Fascine-fill the marsh and the stream;  
Like hornets they swarm up the ramp,  
Lancing a breach through the long palisade,  
Where the rival swarms of the stubborn foe,  
While the sun goes high and goes down o'er the fight,  
Sting them back, blow answering blow:—  
O life-blood lavish as rain  
On war's red Aceldama plain!

While the volleying death-rattle rings,  
And the peasant pays for the pride and the fury-ambition of kings!

And as those of Achaia and Troia  
By the camp on the sand, so they  
In the aether-amber of evening  
Kept even score in the fray;  
Rank against rank, man match'd with man,  
In backward, forward, struggle enlaced,  
Grappled and moor'd to the ground where they stood  
As wrestlers wrestling, as lovers embraced:—  
And the lightnings insatiable fly,  
As the lull of the tempest is nigh,  
And each host in its agony reels,  
And the musket falls hot from the hand, enflamed by the death that it deals.

p. 141But, as when through the vale the rain-clouds  
Darker and heavier flow,  
Above them the dominant summit  
Stands clad in calmness and snow;  
So thou, great Chief, awaiting the turn  
Of the purple tide:—And the moment has come!  
And the signal-word flies out with a smile,  
And they charge the foe in his fastness, home:—  
As one long wave when the wind  
Urges an ocean behind,  
One line, they sweep on the foe,  
And France from our battle recoils, and Victory edges the blow.

As a rock by blue lightning divided  
Down the hillside scatters its course,  
So in twain their army is parted  
By the sabres sabring in force:  
They have striven enough for honour! . . . and now  
Crumble and shatter, and sheer o'er the bank  
Where torrent Danube hisses and swirls  
Slant and hurry in rankless rank:—  
There are sixty thousand the morn  
'Gainst the Lions marching in scorn;  
But twenty, when even is here,  
Broken and brave and at bay, the Lilied banner uprear.

—So be it!—All honour to him  
Who snatch'd the world, in his day,  
From an overmastering King,  
A colossal imperial sway!  
Calm adamantine endurant chief,  
Fit forerunner of him, whose crowning stroke,  
Rousing his Guards on the Flandrian plain,  
Unvassall'd Europe from despot yoke!  
He who from Ganges to Rhine  
p. 142Traced o'er the world his red line  
Irresistible; while in the breast  
Reign'd devotedness utter, and self for England suppress'd!

O names that enhearten the soul,  
Blenheim and Waterloo!  
In no vain worship of glory  
The poet turns him to you!  
O sung by worthier song than mine,



If the day of a nation's weakness rise,  
Of the little counsels that dare not dare,  
Of a land that no more on herself relies,—  
O breath of our great ones that were,  
Burn out this taint in the air!  
The old heart of England restore,  
Till the blood of the heroes awake, and shout in her bosom once more!

—Morning is fresh on the field  
Where the war-sick champions lie,  
By the wreckage of stiffening dead,  
The anguish that yearns but to die.  
Ah note of human agony heard  
The paeon of victory over and through!  
Ah voice of duty and justice stern  
That, at e'en this price, commands them to do!  
And a vision of Glory goes by,  
Veil'd head and remorseful eye,  
A triumph of Death!—And they cried  
'Only less dark than defeat is the morning of conquest';—and sigh'd.

Blenheim is fully described in Lord Stanhope's *Reign of Queen Anne*. Its importance as a critical battle in European history lies in the fact that the work of liberating the Great Alliance against the paramount power of France under Lewis XIV, (which England had unwisely fostered from Cromwell to James II), was secured by this victory. 'The loss of France could not be measured by men or fortresses. A p. 143hundred victories since Rocroi had taught the world to regard the armies of Lewis as all but invincible, when Blenheim and the surrender of the flower of the French soldiery broke the spell': (Green: *History of the English People*: B. VIII: ch. iii).

'The French and Bavarians, who numbered, like their opponents, some fifty thousand men, lay behind a little stream which ran through swampy ground to the Danube . . . It was not till midday that Eugene, who commanded on the right, succeeded in crossing the stream. The English foot at once forded it on the left.' They were repelled for the time. But, in the centre, Marlborough, 'by making an artificial road across the morass which covered it,' in two desperate charges turned the day.

A map of 1705 in the *Annals of Queen Anne's Reign*, shows vast hillsides to the right of the Allies covered with wood. This map also specifies the advance of the English in nine columns.

*Only less*; 'Marlborough,' says Lord Stanhope, 'was a humane and compassionate man. Even in the eagerness to pursue fresh conquests he did not ever neglect the care of the wounded.'

## AT HURSLEY IN MARDEN

1712

We count him wise,  
Timoleon, who in Syracuse laid down  
That gleaming bait of all men's eyes,  
And for his cottage changed the invidious crown;  
Moving serenely through his grayhair'd day  
'Mid vines and olives gray.

He also, whom  
The load of double empire, half the world  
His own, within a living tomb  
Press'd down at Yuste,—Spain's great banner furl'd  
His winding-sheet around him,—while he strove  
The impalpable Above

Though mortal yet,  
To breathe, is blazon'd on the sages' roll:—

p. 144High soaring hearts, who could forget

The sceptre, to the hermitage of the soul  
Retired, sweet solitudes of the musing eye,  
And let the world go by!

There, if the cup  
Of Time, that brims ere we can reach repose,  
Fill'd slow, the soul might summon up  
The strenuous heat of youth, the silenced foes;  
The deeds of fame, star-bright above the throne;  
The better deeds unknown.

There, when the cloud  
Eased its dark breast in thunder, and the light  
Ran forth, their hearts recall the loud  
Hoarse onset roar, the flashing of the fight;  
Those other clouds piled-up in white array  
Whence deadlier lightnings play.

There, when the seas  
Murmur at midnight, and the dome is clear,  
And from their seats in heaven the breeze  
Loosens the stars, to blaze and disappear,  
*And such as Glory!* . . . with a sigh suppress'd  
They smile, and turn to rest.

—But he, who here  
Unglorious hides, untrain'd, unwilling Lord,  
The phantom king of half a year,  
From England's throne push'd by the bloodless sword,  
Unheirlike heir to that colossal fame;—  
How should men name his name,

How rate his worth  
With those heroic ones who, life's labour done,  
Mark'd out their six-foot couch of earth,  
The laurell'd rest of manhood's battle won?  
p. 145—Not so with him! . . . Yet, ere we turn away,  
A still small voice will say,

By other rule  
Than man's coarse glory-test does God bestow  
His crowns: exalting oft the fool,  
So deem'd, and the world-hero levelling low.  
—And he, who from the palace pass'd obscure,  
And honourably poor,

Spurning a throne  
Held by blood-tenure, 'gainst a nation's will;  
Lived on his narrow fields alone,  
Content life's common service to fulfil;  
Not careful of a carnage-bought renown,  
Or that precarious crown:—

Him count we wise,  
Him also! though the chorus of the throng  
Be silent: though no pillar rise  
In slavish adulation of the strong:—  
But here, from blame of tongues and fame aloof,  
'Neath a low chancel roof,

—The peace of God,—

He sleeps: unconscious hero! Lowly grave

By village-footsteps daily trod

Unconscious: or while silence holds the nave,

And the bold robin comes, when day is dim,

And pipes his heedless hymn.

*Timoleon*; was invited from Corinth by the Syracusans (b.c. 344) to be their leader in throwing off the tyranny of the second Dionysius. Having effected this, defeated the Carthaginian invaders, and reduced all the minor despotisms within Sicily, he voluntarily resigned his paramount power and died in honoured retirement.

*He also*; In 1556 the Emperor Charles V gave up all his dominions, withdrawing in 1557 to Yuste;—a monastery situated in a region of p. 146singular natural beauty, between Xarandilla and Plasencia in Estremadura. He died there, Sep. 21, 1558.

*Loosens the stars*; So Vergil, *Georg.* I., 365:

Saepe etiam stellas vento inpendente videbis

Praecipites caelo labi . . .

*The phantom king*; Richard Cromwell was Protector from Sep. 3, 1658 to May 25, 1659. After 1660 his life was that of a simple country gentleman, till his death in 1712, when he was buried at Hursley near Winchester.

*Unheirlike heir*; See *Appendix E*.

## CHARLES EDWARD AT ROME

1785

1

O sunset, of the rise

Unworthy!—that, so brave, so clear, so gay;

This, prison'd in low-hanging earth-mists gray,

And ever-darken'd skies:—

Sad sunset of a royal race in gloom,

Accomplishing to the end the dolorous Stuart doom!

2

Ghost of a king, he sate

In Rome, the city of ghosts and thrones outworn,

Drowsing his thoughts in wine;—a life forlorn;

Pageant of faded state;

Aged before old age, and all that Past,

Like a forgotten thing of shame, behind him cast.

3

Yet if by chance the cry

Of the sharp pibroch through the palace thrill'd,

He felt the pang of high hope unfulfill'd:—

And once, when one came by

p. 147With the dear name of Scotland on his lips,

The heart broke forth behind that forty-years' eclipse,

4

Triumphant in its pain:—

Then the old days of Holyrood halls return'd

The leaden lethargy from his soul he spurn'd,

And was the Prince again:—

All Scotland waking in him; all her bold  
Chieftains and clans:—and all their tale, and his, he told:

5

—Told how, o'er the boisterous seas

From faithless France he danced his way

Where Alban's thousand islands lay,

The kelp-strown ridge of the lone Hebrides:—

How down each strath they stream'd as springtide rills,

When he to Finnan vale

Came from Glenaladale,

And that snow-handful grew an avalanche of the hills.

6

There Lochiel, Glengarry there,

Macdonald, Cameron: souls untried

In war, but stout in mountain-pride

All odds against all worlds to laugh and dare:

Unpurchaseable faith of chief and clan!

Enough! Their Prince has thrown

Himself upon his own!

By hearts not heads they count, and manhood measures man!

7

—Torrent from Lochaber sprung,

Through Badenoch bare and Athole turn'd,

The fettering Forth o'erpast and spurn'd,

Then on the smiling South in fury flung;

p. 148Now gather head with all thine affluent force,

Draw forth the wild mellay!

At Gladsmuir is the fray;

Scotland 'gainst England match'd: White Rose against White Horse!

8

Cluster'd down the slope they go,

Red clumps of ragged valour, down,

While morn-mists yet the hill-top crown:—

Clan Colla! on!—the Camerons touch the foe!

One touch!—the battle breaks, the fight is fought,

As summit-boulders glide

Riddling the forest-side,

And in one moment's crash an army melts to nought!

9

—Ah gay nights of Holyrood!

Star-eyes of Scotland's fairest fair,

Sun-glintings of the golden hair,

Life's tide at full in that brief interlude!

Then as a bark slips from her natural coast

Deep into seas unknown,

Scotland went forth alone,

Unfriended, unallied; a handful 'gainst a host.

10

By the Bolder moorlands bare,  
By faithless Solway's glistening sands,  
And where Caer Luel's dungeon stands,  
Huge keep of ancient Urien, huge, foursquare:—  
Preston, and loyal Lancashire; . . . and then  
From central Derby down,  
To strike the royal town,  
And to his German realm the usurper thrust again!

p. 14911

—O the lithesome mountaineers,  
Wild hearts with kingly boyhood high,  
And victory in each forward eye,  
While stainless honour his white banner rears!  
Then all the air with mountain-music thrill'd,  
The bonnets o'er the brow,—  
My gallant clans! . . . and now  
The voices closed in earth, in death the pibroch still'd!

12

—As beneath Ben Aille's crest  
The west wind weaves its roof of gray,  
And all the glory of the day  
Blooms off from loch and copse and green hill-breast;  
So, when that craven council spoke retreat,  
The fateful shameful word  
They heard,—and scarcely heard!  
At Scotland's name how should the blood refuse to beat?

13

—O soul-piercing stroke of shame!  
O last, last, chance,—and wasted so!  
Work wanting but the final blow,—  
And, then, the hopeless hope, the crownless name,  
The heart's desire defeated!—What boots now  
That ice-brook-temper'd will,  
Indomitable still  
As on through snow and storm their path the dalesmen plough?

14

—Yet again the tartans hail  
One smile of Scotland's ancient face;  
One favour waits the faithful race,—  
One triumph more at Falkirk crowns the Gael!  
p. 150And O! what drop of Scottish blood that runs  
Could aught, save do or die,  
And Bannockburn so nigh?  
What cause to higher height could animate her sons?

15

Up the gorse-embattled brae,  
With equal eager feet they dash,  
And on the moorland summit clash,  
Friend mix'd with foe in stormy disarray:  
Once more the Northern charge asserts its right,

As with the driving rain

They drive them down the plain:

That star alone before Drummossie gilds the night.

16

—Ah! No more!—let others tell

The agony of the mortal moor;

Death's silent sheepfold dotted o'er

With Scotland's best, sleet-shrouded as they fell!

There on the hearts, once mine, the snow-wreaths drift;

Night's winter dews at will

In bitter tears distil,

And o'er the field the stars their squadrons coldly shift.

17

Faithful in a faithless age!

Yet happier, in that death-dew drench'd,

In each rude hand the claymore clench'd,

Than who, to soothe a nation's craven rage,

To the red scaffold went with steady eye,

And the red martyr-grave,

For one, who could not save!

Who only lives to weep the weight of life, and die!

18

—He ended, with such grief

As fits and honours manhood:—Then, once more

p. 151 Weaving that long romantic lay, told o'er

The names of clan and chief

Who perill'd all for him, and died;—and how

In islets, caves, and clefts, and bare high mountain-brow

19

The wanderer hid, and all

His Odyssey of woes!—Then, agonized

Not by the wrongs he suffer'd and despised,

But for the Cause's fall,—

The faces, loved and lost, that for his sake

Were raven-torn and blanch'd, high on the traitor's stake,

20

As on Drummossie drear

They fell,—as a dead body falls,—so he;

Swoon-senseless at that killing memory

Seen across year on year:

O human tears! O honourable pain!

Pity unchill'd by age, and wounds that bleed again!

21

—Ah, much enduring heart!

Ah soul, miscounsell'd oft and lured astray,

In that long life-despair, from wisdom's way

And thy young hero-part!—

—And yet—Dilexit multum!—In that cry

Love's gentler judgment pleads; thine epitaph a sigh!

The sad old age of Prince Charles is described by Lord Mahon [Stanhope] in his able *History*: ch. xxx: and some additional details will be found in Chambers’ narrative of the expedition. During later life, an almost entire silence seems to have been maintained by the Prince upon his earlier days and his royal claims. But the bagpipe was occasionally heard in the Roman Palace, and a casual visit, which Lord Mahon fixes in 1785, drew forth the recital which is the subject of this poem. The prince fainted as he recalled what his Highland followers had gone through, and his daughter rushing in exclaimed to the visitor, ‘Sir! what is this! You must have been p. 152speaking to my father about Scotland and the Highlanders! No one dares to mention these subjects in his presence:’ (Mahon: ch. xxvi).

St. 2 *Drowsing His thoughts*; The habit of intemperance, common in that century to many who had not Charles Edward’s excuses, appear to have been learned during the long privations which accompanied his wanderings, between Culloden and his escape to France.

St. 5 *Hebrides*; Charles landed at Erisca, an islet between Barra and South Uist, in July 1745.

St. 7 *Fettering Forth*; ‘Forth,’ according to the proverb, ‘bridles the wild Highlandman.’—Charles passed it at the Ford of Frew, about eight miles above Stirling.—*At Gladsmuir*; or Preston Pans; Sep. 21, 1745.—*White Horse*; The armorial bearing of Hanover.

St. 8 *Clan Colla*; general name for the sept of the Macdonalds.

St. 10 *Caer Luel*; Urien ap Urbgen is an early hero of Strathclyde or Alcluith, the British kingdom lying between Dumbarton and Carlisle, then Caer Luel.

St. 12 *Ben Aille*; a mountain over Loch Ericht in the central Highlands.

St. 13 *Ice-brook-temper’d*; ‘It is a sword of Spain, the ice-brook’s temper’: (*Othello*: A. 5: S. 2).

St. 14 *At Falkirk*; Jan 17, 1746. ‘On the eve after his victory Charles again encamped on Bannockburn.’

St. 16 *The mortal moor*; named Culloden and Drum Mossie: Ap. 16, 1746. The cold at that time was very severe.

St. 17 *A nation’s craven rage*; See Appendix F.

St. 21 *Love’s gentler judgment*; We may perhaps quote on his behalf Vergil’s beautiful words

. . . utcumque ferent ea facta minores,  
Vincet amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido.

—It is also pleasant to record that over the coffin of Charles in S. Peter’s, Rome, a monument was placed by George the Fourth, upon which, by a graceful and gallant ‘act of oblivion,’ are inscribed the names of James the Third, Charles the Third, and Henry the Ninth, ‘Kings of England.’

On the simple monument set up by his brother Henry in S. Pietro, Frascati, it may be worth notice that Charles is only described as *Paterni iuris et regiae | dignitatis successor et heres*:—the title, King, (given to his Father in the inscription), not being assigned to Charles, or assumed by the Cardinal.

**p. 153TRAFALGAR**

October 21: 1805

Heard ye the thunder of battle  
Low in the South and afar?  
Saw ye the flash of the death-cloud  
Crimson o’er Trafalgar?  
Such another day never  
England will look on again,  
When the battle fought was the hottest,  
And the hero of heroes was slain!

For the fleet of France and the force of Spain were gather’d for fight,  
A greater than Philip their lord, a new Armada in might:—

And the sails were aloft once more in the deep Gaditanian bay,  
Where *Redoubtable* and *Bucentaure* and great *Trinidad* lay;  
Eager-reluctant to close; for across the bloodshed to be  
Two navies beheld one prize in its glory,—the throne of the sea!  
Which were bravest, who should tell? for both were gallant and true;  
But the greatest seaman was ours, of all that sail'd o'er the blue.

From Cadiz the enemy sallied: they knew not Nelson was there;  
His name a navy to us, but to them a flag of despair.  
'Twixt Algeziras and Ayamonte he guarded the coast,  
Till he bore from Tavira south; and they now must fight, or be lost;—  
Vainly they steer'd for the Rock and the Midland sheltering sea,  
For he headed the Admirals round, constraining them under his lee,  
p. 154 Villeneuve of France, and Gravina of Spain: so they shifted their ground,  
They could choose,—they were more than we;—and they faced at Trafalgar round;  
Rampart-like ranged in line, a sea-fortress angrily tower'd!  
In the midst, four-storied with guns, the dark *Trinidad* lower'd.

So with those.—But meanwhile, as against some dyke that men massively rear,  
From on high the torrent surges, to drive through the dyke as a spear,  
Eagled-eyed e'en in his blindness, our chief sets his double array,  
Making the fleet two spears, to thrust at the foe, any way, . . .  
'Anyhow!—without orders, each captain his Frenchman may grapple perforce:  
Collingwood first' (yet the *Victory* ne'er a whit slacken'd her course)  
'Signal for action! Farewell! we shall win, but we meet not again!'  
—Then a low thunder of readiness ran from the decks o'er the main,  
And on,—as the message from masthead to masthead flew out like a flame,  
England expects every man will do his duty,—they came.

—Silent they come:—While the thirty black forts of the foeman's array  
Clothe them in billowy snow, tier speaking o'er tier as they lay;  
Flashes that thrust and drew in, as swords when the battle is rife;—  
p. 155 But ours stood frowningly smiling, and ready for death as for life.  
—O in that interval grim, ere the furies of slaughter embrace,  
Thrills o'er each man some far echo of England; some glance of some face!  
—Faces gazing seaward through tears from the ocean-girt shore;  
Faces that ne'er can be gazed on again till the death-pang is o'er. . . .  
Lone in his cabin the Admiral kneeling, and all his great heart  
As a child's to the mother, goes forth to the loved one, who bade him depart  
. . . O not for death, but glory! her smile would welcome him home!  
—Louder and thicker the thunderbolts fall:—and silent they come.

As when beyond Dongola the lion, whom hunters attack,  
Plagued by their darts from afar, leaps in, dividing them back;  
So between Spaniard and Frenchman the *Victory* wedged with a shout,  
Gun against gun; a cloud from her decks and lightning went out;  
Iron hailing of pitiless death from the sulphury smoke;  
Voices hoarse and parch'd, and blood from invisible stroke.  
Each man stood to his work, though his mates fell smitten around,  
As an oak of the wood, while his fellow, flame-shatter'd, besplinters the ground:—  
Gluttons of danger for England, but sparing the foe as he lay;  
For the spirit of Nelson was on them, and each was Nelson that day.

p. 156 'She has struck!'—he shouted—'She burns, the *Redoubtable*! Save whom we can,  
Silence our guns':—for in him the woman was great in the man,  
In that heroic heart each drop girl-gentle and pure,  
Dying by those he spared;—and now Death's triumph was sure!  
From the deck the smoke-wreath clear'd, and the foe set his rifle in rest,  
Dastardly aiming, where Nelson stood forth, with the stars on his breast,—  
'In honour I gain'd them, in honour I die with them' . . . Then, in his place,



Fell . . . ‘Hardy! ’tis over; but let them not know’: and he cover’d his face.  
Silent, the whole fleet’s darling they bore to the twilight below:  
And above the war-thunder came shouting, as foe struck his flag after foe.

To his heart death rose: and for Hardy, the faithful, he cried in his pain,—  
‘How goes the day with us, Hardy?’ . . . ‘’Tis ours’:—Then he knew, not in vain  
Not in vain for his comrades and England he bled: how he left her secure,  
Queen of her own blue seas, while his name and example endure.  
O, like a lover he loved her! for her as water he pours  
Life-blood and life and love, lavish’d all for her sake, and for ours!  
—‘Kiss me, Hardy!—Thank God!—I have done my duty!’—And then  
Fled that heroic soul, and left not his like among men.

Hear ye the heart of a nation  
Groan, for her saviour is gone;  
p. 157Gallant and true and tender,  
Child and chieftain in one?  
Such another day never  
England will weep for again,  
When the triumph darken’d the triumph,  
And the hero of heroes was slain.

**TORRES VEDRAS**

1810

As who, while erst the Achaians wall’d the shore,  
Stood Atlas-like before,  
A granite face against the Trojan sea  
Of foes who seethed and foam’d,  
From that stern rock refused incessantly;

So He, in his colossal lines, astride  
From sea to river-side,  
Alhandra past Aruda to the Towers,  
Our one true man of men  
Frown’d back bold France and all the Imperial powers.

For when that Eagle, towering in his might  
Beyond the bounds of Right,  
O’ercanopied Europe with his rushing wings,  
And all the world was prone  
Before him as a God, a King of Kings;

When Freedom to one isle, her ancient shrine,  
O’er the free favouring brine  
Fled, as a girl by lustful war and shame  
Discloister’d from her home,  
Barefoot, with glowing eyes, and cheeks on flame,

p. 158And call’d aloud, and bade the realm awake  
To arms for Freedom’s sake:  
—Yet,—for the land had rusted long in rest,  
The nerves of war unstrung,  
Faint thoughts or rash alternate in her breast,

While purblind party-strife with venomous spite  
Made plausible wrong seem right,—  
O then for that unselfish hero-chief  
Tender and true, and lost

At Trafalgar,—or him, whose patriot grief

Died with the prayer for England, as he died,  
In vain we might have cried!  
But this one pillar rose, and bore the war  
Upon himself alone;  
Supreme o'er Fortune and her idle star.

For not by might but mind, by skill, not chance,  
He headed stubborn France  
From Tagus back by Douro to Garonne;  
And on the last, worst, field,  
The crown of all his hundred victories won,

World-calming Waterloo!—Then, laying by  
War's fearful enginery,  
In each state-tempest mann'd the wearying helm;  
E'en through life's winter-years  
Serving with all his strength the ungrateful realm.

O firm and foursquare mind! O solid will  
Fix'd, inexpugnable  
By crowns or censures! only bent to do  
The day's work in the day;—  
Fame with her idiot yelp might come, or go!

O breast that dared with Nature's patience wait  
Till the slow wheels of Fate  
p. 159Struck the consummate hour; in leash the while  
Reining his eager bands,  
The prey in view,—with that foreseeing smile!

And when for blood on Salamanca ridge  
Morn broke, or Orthez' bridge,  
He read the ground, and his stern squadrons moved  
And placed with artist-skill,  
Red counters in the perilous game they loved,

Impassive, iron, he and they!—and then  
With eagle-keener ken  
Glanced through the field, the crisis-instant knew,  
And through the gap of war  
His thundering legions on their victory threw.

Not iron, he, but adamant! Diamond-strong,  
And diamond-clear of wrong:  
For truth he struck right out, whate'er befall!  
Above the fear of fear:  
Duty for duty's sake his all-in-all.

Among the many wonders of Wellington's Peninsular campaign, from Vimiera (1808) to Toulouse (1814), the magnificent unity of scheme preserved throughout is, perhaps, the most wonderful: the dramatic coherence, development, and final catastrophe of triumph. For this, however, readers must be referred to Napier's *History*; Enough here to add that one of the most decisive steps was the formation of the lines in defence of Lisbon, of which the most northerly ran from Alhandra on the Tagus by Aruda and Zibreira to Torres Vedras near the sea-coast at the mouth of the Zizandre.

*When Freedom*; the unwise and uncertain management of the campaign by the English home Government has been set forth by Napier with so much emphasis as, in some degree, to impair the reader's full conviction. Yet the amazing superiority in energy and wisdom with which Wellington towered over his contemporaries, (the field being, however,

cleared by the recent deaths of Nelson and Pitt), is so patent, that this attempt to do justice to his greatness is offered with hesitation and apology.

*Orthez' Bridge*; crosses the river named Gave de Pau;—and covered Soult's forces then lying north of it.

## **p. 160THE SOLDIERS' BATTLE**

November 5: 1854

In the solid sombre mist  
And the drizzling dazzling shower  
They may mass them as they list,  
The gray-coat Russian power;  
They are fifties 'gainst our tens, they, and more!  
And from the fortress-town  
In silent squadrons down  
O'er the craggy mountain-crown  
Unseen, they pour.

On the meagre British line  
That northern ocean press'd;  
But we never knew how few  
Were we who held the crest!  
While within the curtain-mist dark shadows loom  
Making the gray more gray,  
Till the volley-flames betray  
With one flash the long array:  
And then, the gloom.

For our narrow line too wide  
On the narrow crest we stood,  
And in pride we named it *Home*,  
As we sign'd it with our blood.  
And we held-on all the morning, and the tide  
Of foes on that low dyke  
Surged up, and fear'd to strike,  
Or on the bayonet-spike  
Flung them, and died.

It was no covert, that,  
'Gainst the shrieking cannon-ball!  
But the stout hearts of our men  
p. 161Were the bastion and the wall:—  
And their chiefs hardly needed give command;  
For they tore through copse and gray  
Mist that before them lay,  
And each man fought, that day,  
For his own hand!

Yet should we not forget  
'Gainst that dun sea of foes  
How Egerton bank'd his line,  
Till in front a cloud uprose  
From the level rifle-mouths; and they dived  
With bayonet-thrust beneath;  
Clench'd teeth and sharp-drawn breath,  
Plunging to certain death,—  
And yet survived!

Nor the gallant chief who led

Those others, how he fell;  
When our men the captive guns  
Set free they loved so well,  
And embraced them as live things, by loss endear'd:—  
Nor, when the crucial stroke  
On their last asylum broke,  
And e'en those hearts of oak  
Might well have fear'd,—

How Stanley to the fore  
The citadel rush'd to guard,  
With that old Albuera cry  
*Fifty-seventh! Die hard!*  
Yet saw not how his lads clear the crest,  
And, each one confronting five,  
The stubborn squadrons rive,  
And backward, downward, drive,—  
—Death-call'd to rest!

p. 162—O proud and sad for thee!  
And proud and sad for those  
Who on that stern foreign field  
Not seeking, found repose,  
As for England dear their life they gladly shed!  
Yet in death bethought them where,  
Not on these hillsides bare,  
But within sweet English air  
Their own home-dead

In a green and sure repose  
Beside God's house are laid:—  
Then faced the charging foes  
Unmoved, unhelp'd, unafraid:—  
For they knew that God would rate each shatter'd limb  
Death-torn for England's sake,  
And in Christ's own mercy take  
On the day when souls shall wake,  
Their souls to Him!

The battle of Inkermann was mainly fought on a ridge of rock which projects from the south-eastern angle of Sebastapol: the English centre of operations being the ill-fortified line named the 'Home Ridge.' The numbers engaged in field-operations, roughly speaking, were 4,000 English against 40,000 Russians.

*The curtain-mist*; The battle began about 6 a.m. under heavy mist and drizzling rain, which lasted for several hours. Through this curtain the Russian forces coming down from the hill were seen only when near enough to darken the mist by their masses.

*Egerton*; He commanded four companies of the 77th, and charged early in the battle with brilliant success;—his men, about 250, scattering 1500 Russians.

*The gallant chief*; General Soimonoff, killed just after Egerton's charge.

*With that old Albuera cry*; Prominent in the defence of the English main base of operations, the Home Ridge, against a weighty Russian advance, was Captain Stanley, commanding the 57th. This regiment, it was said, at the battle of Albuera had been encouraged by its colonel p. 163with the words, 'Fifty-seventh, die hard':—and Stanley, having less than 400 against 2000, thought the time had come to remind his 'Die-hards' of their traditional gallantry;—after which he himself at once fell mortally wounded.

**AFTER CAWNPORE**

Fourteen, all told, no more,  
Pack'd close within the door  
Of that old idol-shrine:  
And at them, as they stand,  
And from that English band,

The leaden shower went out, and Death proclaim'd them  
*Mine!*

Fourteen against an army; they, no more,  
Had 'scaped Cawnpore.

With each quick volley-flash  
The bullets ping and plash:  
Yet, though the tropic noon  
With furnace-fury broke  
The sulphur-curling smoke,

Scarr'd, sear'd, thirst-silenced, hunger-faint, they stood:  
And soon  
A dusky wall,—death sheltering life,—uprose  
Against their foes.

Behind them now is cast  
The horror of the past;  
The fort that was no fort,  
The deep dark-heaving flood  
Of foes that broke in blood

On our devoted camp, victims of fiendish sport;  
From that last huddling refuge lured to fly,  
—And help so nigh!

p. 164  
Down toward the reedy shore  
That fated remnant pour,  
Had Fear and Death beside;  
And other spectres yet  
Of darker vision flit,—

Old unforgotten wrongs, the harshness and the pride  
Of that imperial race which sway'd the land  
By sheer command!

O little hands that strain  
A mother's hand in vain  
With terror vague and vast:—  
Parch'd eyes that cannot shed  
One tear upon the head,

A young child's head, too bright for such fell death to blast!  
Ah! sadder captive train ne'er filed to doom  
Through vengeful Rome!

From Ganges' reedy shore  
The death-boats they unmoor,  
Stack'd high with hopeless hearts;  
A slowly-drifting freight  
Through the red jaws of Fate,

Death-blazing banks between, and flame-wing'd arrow-darts:—  
Till down the holy stream those cargoes pour  
Their flame and gore.

In feral order slow  
The slaughter-barges go,

Martyrs of heathen scorn:

While, saved from flood and fire

To glut the tyrant's ire,

The quick and dead in one, from their red shambles borne,

Maiden and child, in that dark grave they throw,

Our well of woe!

p. 165 Ah spot on which we gaze

Through Time's all-softening haze,

In peace, on them at peace

And taken home to God!

—O whether 'neath the sod,

Or sea, or desert sand, what care,—if that release

From this dim shadow-land, through pathways dim,

Bear us to Him!

But those fourteen, the while,

Wrapt in the present, smile

On their grim baffled foe;

Till o'er the wall he heaps

The fuel-pile, and steeps

With all that burns and blasts;—and now, perforce, they go

Hack'd down and thinn'd, beyond that temple-door

But Seven,—no more.

O Elements at strife

With this poor human life,

Stern laws of Nature fair!

By flame constrain'd to fly

The treacherous stream they try,—

And those dark Ganges waves suck down the souls they bear!—

Ah, crowning anguish! Dawn of hope in sight;

Then, final night!

And now, Four heads, no more,

Life's flotsam flung ashore,

They lie:—But not as they

Who o'er a dreadful past

The heart's-ease sigh may cast!

Too worn! too tried!—their lives but given them as a prey!

Whilst all seems now a dream, a nought of nought,

For which they fought!

p. 166—O stout Fourteen, who bled

O'erwhelm'd, not vanquishéd!

In those dark days of blood

How many dared, and died,

And others at their side

Fresh heroes, sprang,—a race that cannot be subdued!

—Like them who pass'd Death's vale, and lived;—the Four

Saved from Cawnpore!

The English garrison at Cawnpore, with a large number of sick, women, and children, were besieged in their hastily made and weak earthworks by Nana Sahib from June 6 to June 25, 1857. Compelled to surrender, under promise of safe convoy down the Ganges, on the 27th they were massacred by musketry from the banks; the thatch of the river-boats being also fired. The survivors were murdered and thrown into the well upon Havelock's approach on July 15.

One boat managed to escape unburnt on June 27. It was chased through the 28th and 29th, by which time the crowd on board was reduced to fourteen men, one of whom, Mowbray-Thomson, has left a narrative equally striking from its vividness and its modesty. Seven escaped from the small temple in which they defended themselves; four only finally

survived to tell the story.

*A dusky wall; ‘After a little time they stood behind a rampart of black and bloody corpses, and fired, with comparative security, over this bulwark:’* (Kaye: *Sepoy War*: B. V: ch. ii).

## MOUNT VERNON

October 5: 1860

Before the hero’s grave he stood,  
—A simple stone of rest, and bare  
To all the blessing of the air,—  
And Peace came down in sunny flood  
From the blue haunts of heaven, and smiled  
Upon the household reconciled.

p. 167—A hundred years have hardly flown  
Since in this hermitage of the West  
’Mid happy toil and happy rest,  
Loving and loved among his own,  
His days fulfill’d their fruitful round,  
Seeking no move than what they found.

Sweet byways of the life withdrawn!  
Yet here his country’s voice,—the cry  
Of man for natural liberty,—  
That great Republic in her dawn,  
The immeasurable Future,—broke;  
And to his fate the Leader woke.

Not eager, yet, the blade to bare  
Before the Father-country’s eyes,—  
—E’en if a parent’s rights, unwise,  
With that bold Son he grudged to share,  
In manhood strong beyond the sea,  
And ripe to wed with Liberty!

—Yet O! when once the die was thrown,  
With what unselfish patient skill,  
Clear-piercing flame of changeless will,  
The one high heart that moved alone  
Sedate through the chaotic strife,—  
He taught mankind the hero-life!

As when the God whom Pheidias moulds,  
Clothed in marmoreal calm divine,  
Veils all that strength ’neath beauty’s line,  
All energy in repose enfolds;—  
So He, in self-effacement great,  
Magnanimous to endure and wait.

O Fabius of a wider world!  
Master of Fate through self-control  
And utter stainlessness of soul!  
p. 168And when war’s weary sign was furl’d,  
Prompt with both hands to welcome in  
The white-wing’d Peace he warr’d to win!

Then, to that so long wish’d repose!  
The liberal leisure of the farm,

The garden joy, the wild-wood charm;  
Life ebbing to its perfect close  
Like some white altar-lamp that pales  
And self-consumed its light exhales.

No wrathful tempest smote its wing  
Against life's tender flickering flame;  
No tropic gloom in terror came;  
Slow waning as a summer-spring  
The soul breathed out herself, and slept,  
And to the end her beauty kept.

Then, as a mother's love and fears  
Throng round the child, unseen but felt,  
So by his couch his nation knelt,  
Loving and worshipping with her tears:—  
Tears!—late amends for all that debt  
Due to the Liberator yet!

For though the years their golden round  
O'er all the lavish region roll,  
And realm on realm, from pole to pole,  
In one beneath thy stars be bound:  
The far-off centuries as they flow,  
No whiter name than this shall know!

—O larger England o'er the wave,  
Larger, not greater, yet!—With joy  
Of generous hearts ye hail'd the Boy  
Who bow'd before the sacred grave,  
With Love's fair freight across the sea  
Sped from the Fatherland to thee!

p. 169 And Freedom on that Empire-throne  
Blest in his Mother's rule revered,  
On popular love a kingdom rear'd,  
And rooted in the years unknown,—  
Land rich in old Experience' store  
And holy legacies of yore,

And youth eternal, ever-new,—  
From the high heaven look'd out:—and saw  
This other later realm of Law,  
Of that old household first-born true,  
And lord of half a world!—and smiled  
Upon the nations reconciled.

The date prefixed is that of the visit which the Prince of Wales paid to the tomb of Washington: carrying home thence, as one of the most distinguished of his hosts said, 'an unwritten treaty of amity and alliance.'

Mount Vernon on the Potomac, named after the Admiral, was the family seat of Augustine, father to George Washington, and the residence of the latter from 1752. But all his early years also had been spent in that neighbourhood, in those country pursuits which formed his ideal of life: and thither, on resigning his commission as Commander-in-Chief, he retired in 1785; devoting himself to farming and gardening with all the strenuousness and devoted passion of a Roman of Vergil's type. And there (Dec. 1799) was he buried.

*Not eager*; When the ill-feeling between England and America deepened after 1765, Washington 'was less eager than some others in declaring or declaiming against the mother country;' (Mahon: *Hist.* ch. lii).

*Ripe to wed with Liberty*; See Appendix G.



*And to the end; See Petrarch's beautiful lines: Trionfo della Morte, cap. I.*

*Due to the Liberator; Compare the epitaph by Ennius on Scipio:*

Hic est ille situs, cui nemo civi' neque hostis  
Quiviv pro factis reddere opis pretium.

History, it may be said with reasonable confidence, records no hero more unselfish, no one less stained with human error and frailty, than George Washington.

*The years unknown; It is to Odin, whatever date be thereby signified, that our royal genealogy runs back.*

## **p. 170SANDRINGHAM**

1871

In the drear November gloom  
And the long December night,  
There were omens of affright,  
And prophecies of doom;  
And the golden lamp of life burn'd spectre-dim,  
Till Love could hardly mark  
The little sapphire spark  
That only made the dark  
More dark and grim.

There not around alone  
Watch'd sister, brother, wife,  
And she who gave him life,  
White as if wrought in stone  
Unheard, invisible, by the bed of death  
Stood eager millions by;  
And as the hour drew nigh,  
Dreading to see him die,  
Held their breath.

Where'er in world-wide skies  
The Lion-Banner burns,  
A common impulse turns  
All hearts to where he lies:—  
For as a babe the heir of that great throne  
Is weak and motionless;  
And they feel the deep distress  
On wife and mother press,  
As 'twere their own.

O! not the thought of race  
From Asian Odin drawn  
p. 171In History's mythic dawn,  
Nor what we downward trace,  
—Plantagenet, York, Edward, Elizabeth,—  
Heroic names approved,—  
The blood of the people moved;  
But that, 'mongst those he loved,  
He fought with death.

And if the Reason said  
"Gainst Nature's law and death  
Prayer is but idle breath,"—  
Yet Faith was undismayed,

Arm'd with the deeper insight of the heart:—  
Nor can the wisest say  
What other laws may sway  
The world's apparent way,  
Known but in part.

Nor knew we on that life  
What burdens may be cast;  
What issues wide and vast  
Dependent on that strife:—  
This only:—'Twas the son of those we loved!  
That in his Mother's hand  
Peace set her golden wand;  
'Mid heaving realms, one land  
Law-ruled, unmoved.

—He fought, and we with him!  
And other Powers were by,  
Courage, and Science high,  
Grappling the spectre grim  
On the battle-field of quiet Sandringham:  
And force of perfect Love,  
And the will of One above,  
Chased Death's dark squadrons off,  
And overcame.

p. 172—O soul, to life restored  
And love, and wider aim  
Than private care can claim,  
—And from Death's unsheath'd sword!  
By suffering and by safety dearer made:—  
O may the life new-found  
Through life be wisdom-crown'd,—  
Till in the common ground  
Thou too art laid!

**A DORSET IDYL**

*HARCOMBE NEAR LYME*

September: 1878

Before me with one happy heave  
Of golden green the hillside curves,  
Where slowly, smoothly, rounding swerves  
The shadow of each perfect tree,  
By slanting shafts of eve  
Flame-fringed and bathed in pale transparency.

And that long ridge that crowns the hill  
Stands fir-dark 'gainst the falling rays;  
Above, a waft of pearly haze  
Lies on the sapphire field of air,  
So radiant and so still  
As though a star-cloud took its station there.

Up wold and wild the valley goes,  
'Mid heath and mounded slopes of oak,  
And light ash-thicket, where the smoke  
Wreathes high in evening's air serene,

Floating in white repose  
O'er the blue reek of cottage-hearths unseen.

p. 173 Another landscape at my feet  
Unfolds its nearer grace the while,  
Where gorses gleam with golden smile;  
Where Inula lifts a russet head  
The shepherd's spikenard sweet;  
And closing Centaury points her rosy red.

One light cicada's simmering cry,  
Survivor of the summer heat,  
Chimes faint; the robin, shrill and sweet,  
Pipes from green holly; whilst from far  
The rookery croaks reply,  
Hoarse, deep, as veterans readying for war.

—Grief on a happier future dwells;  
The happy present haunts the past;  
And those old minstrels who outlast  
Our looser-textured webs of song,  
Nursed in Hellenic dells,  
Sicilian, or Italian, hither throng.

Why care if Turk and Tartar fume,  
Barbarian 'gainst barbarian set,  
Or how our politic prophets fret,  
When on this tapestry-thyme and heath,  
Fresh work of Nature's loom,  
Thus, thus, we can diffuse ourselves, and breathe

Autumnal sparkling freshness?—while  
The page by some bless'd miracle saved  
When Goth and Frank 'gainst Hellas raved.  
Paints how the wanderer-chief divine,  
Snatch'd from Circaean guile,  
Led by Nausicaa past Athéné's shrine,

In that delicious garden sate  
Where summer link'd to summer glows,  
Grapes ever ripe, and rose on rose;  
p. 174 And all the wonders of thy tale  
—O greatest of the great—  
Whose splendour ne'er can fade, nor beauty fail!

Or by the city of God above  
In rose-red meadows, where the day  
Eternal burns, the bless'd ones stray;  
The harp lets loose its silver showers  
From the dark incense-grove;  
And happiness blooms forth with all her flowers.

O Theban strain,—remote and pure,  
Voice of the higher soul, that shames  
Our downward, dry, material aims,  
The bestial creed of earth-to-earth,—  
Owning with insight sure  
The signs that speak of Man's celestial birth!

Or white Colonos here through green

Green Dorset winds his holy vale,  
Where the divine deep nightingale  
Heaps note on note and love on love,  
In ivy thick unseen,  
While goddesses with Dionysos rove.

Another music then we hear,  
A cry from the Sicilian dell,  
'Here 'mid sweet grapes and laurel dwell;  
Slips by from wood-girt Aetna's dome  
Snow-cold the stream and clear:—  
Hither to me, come, Galataea, come!'

—Voices and dreams long fled and gone!  
And other echoes make reply,  
The low Maenalian melody  
''Twas in our garth, a twelve-year child,  
I saw thee, little one,  
Pick the red fruit that to thy fancy smiled,

p. 175'Thee and thy mother: I, your guide:'—  
O sweet magician! Happy heart!  
Content with that unrivall'd art,—  
The soul of grace in music shrined,—  
And notes of modest pride,  
To sing the life he loved to all mankind!

There, shading pine and torrent-song  
Breathe midday slumber, sudden, sweet;  
Deep meadows woo the wayward feet;  
In giant elm the ring-doves moan;  
There, peace secure from wrong,  
The life that keeps its promise, there, alone!

—O loftier than the wordy strife  
That floats o'er capitals; the chase  
Of florid pleasure; the blind race  
Of gold for gold by gamblers run,  
This fair Vergilian life,  
Where heaven and we and nature are at one!

On that deep soil great Rome was sown;  
Our England her foundations laid:—  
Hence, while the nations, change-dismay'd,  
To tyrant or to quack repair,  
A healthier heart we own,  
And the plant Man grows stronger than elsewhere.

Should changeful commerce shun the shore,  
And newer, mightier races meet  
To push us from our empire-seat,  
England will round her call her own,  
And as in days of yore  
The sea-girt Isle be Freedom's central throne.

Freedom, fair daughter-wife of Law;  
One bright face on the future cast,  
One reverent fix'd upon the past,  
p. 176And that for Hope, for Wisdom this:—  
While counsels wild and raw

Fly those keen eyes, and leave the land to bliss:—

Dear land, where new is one with old:  
Land of green hillside and of plain,  
Gray tower and grange and tree-fringed lane,  
Red crag and silver streamlet sweet,  
Wild wood and ruin bold,  
And this repose of beauty at my feet:—

Fair Vale, for summer day-dreams high,  
For reverie in solitude  
Fashion'd in Nature's finest mood;  
Or, sweeter yet, for fond excess  
Of glee, and vivid cry,  
Whilst happy children find more happiness

Ranging the brambled hollows free  
For purple feast;—till, light as Hope,  
The little footsteps scale the slope;  
And from the highest height we view  
Our island-girdling sea  
Bar the green valley with a wall of blue.

The poets whose landscape-pictures are here contrasted with English scenery, are Homer, Pindar, Sophocles, Theocritus, and Vergil.

## **p. 177A HOME IN THE PALACE**

1840-1861

Thrice fortunate he  
Who, in the palace born, has early learn'd  
The lore of sweet simplicity:  
From smiling gold his eyes inviolate turn'd,  
Turn'd unreturning:—Who the people's cause,  
The sovereign-levelling laws,  
  
Above the throne,  
—He made for them, not they for him,—has set;  
Life-lavish for his land alone,  
Whether she crown with gratitude, or forget:—  
He, who in courts beneath the purple weight  
Of precedence moves sedate,  
  
By all that glare  
Of needful pageantry less stirr'd than still'd,  
Bringing a waft of natural air  
Through halls with pomp and flattering incense fill'd;  
And in the central heart's calm secret, waits  
The closure of the gates,

The music mute,  
The darkling lamps, the festal tables clear:—  
Then,—glad as one who from pursuit  
Breathes safe, and lets himself himself appear,—  
Turns to the fireside jest, the laughing eyes,  
The love without disguise,—

On home alone,  
The loyal partnership of man with wife,

Building a throne beyond the throne;  
All happiness in that common household life  
By peasant shared with prince,—when toil and health,  
    True parents of true wealth,

p. 178To its fair close  
Round the long day, and all are in the nest,  
    And care relaxes to repose,  
And the blithe restless nursery lulls to rest;  
Prayer at the mother's knee; and on their beds  
    We kiss the shining heads!

—Thrice fortunate he  
Who o'er himself thus won his masterdom,  
    Earning that rare felicity  
E'en in the palace walls to find the Home!  
Who shaped his life in calmness, firm and true,  
    Each day, and all day through,

To that high goal  
Where self, for England's sake, was self-effaced,  
    In silence reining-in his soul  
On the strait difficult line by wisdom traced,  
'Twixt gulf and siren, avalanche and ravine,  
    Guarding the golden mean.

Hence, as the days  
Went by, with insight time-enrich'd and true,  
    O'er Europe's policy-tangled maze  
He glanced, and touch'd the central shining clue:  
And when the tides of party roar'd and surged,  
    'Gainst the state-bulwarks urged

By factious aim  
Masquing beneath some specious patriot cloke,  
    Or flaunting a time-honour'd name,—  
Athwart the flood he held an even stroke;  
Between extremes on her old compass straight  
    Aiding to steer the state.

With equal mind,  
Hence,—sure of those he loved on earth, and then  
    His loved ones sure again to find,—  
p. 179For Christ's and England's cause, Goodwill to men,  
To the end he strove, and put the fever by,—  
    Ready to live or die.

—And if in death  
We were not so alone, who might not quit,  
    Smiling, this tediousness of breath,  
These bubble joys that flash and burst and flit,—  
This tragicomedy of life, where scarce  
    We know if it be farce,

A puppet-sight  
Of nerve-pull'd dolls that o'er the world dance by,  
    Or Good in that unequal fight  
With Ill . . . who from such theatre would not fly?  
—But those dear faces round the bed disarm  
    Death of his natural charm!

—O Prince, to Her  
First placed, first honour'd in our love and faith,  
True stay, true constant counsellor,  
From that first love of boyhood's prime,—to death!  
O if thy soul on earth permitted gaze  
In these less-fortunate days

When, hour by hour,  
The million armaments of the world are set  
Skill-weapon'd with new demon-power,  
Mouthing around this little isle, . . . and yet  
On dream-security our fate we cast,  
Of all that glory-past

With light fool-heart  
Oblivious! . . . O in spirit again restored,  
Insoul us to the nobler part,  
The chivalrous loyalty of thy life and word!  
Thou, who in Her to whom first love was due,  
Didst love her England too,

p. 180If earthly care  
In that eternal home, where thou dost wait  
Renewal of the days that were,  
Move thee at all,—upon the realm estate  
The wisdom of thy virtue, the full store  
Thy life's experience bore!

O known when lost,  
Lost, yet not fully known, in all thy grace  
Of bloom by cruel early frost,  
Best prized and most by Her, to whom thy face  
Was love and life and counsel:—If this strain  
Renew not all in vain

The bitter cry  
Of yearning for the loss we yet deplore,—  
Yet for her heart, who stood too nigh  
For comfort, till God's hour thy face restore.  
Man has no lenitive! He, who wrought the grief, . . .  
Alone commands relief.

—Thou, as the rose  
Lies buried in her fragrance, when on earth  
The summer-loosen'd blossom flows,  
Art sepulchred and embalm'd in native worth:  
While to thy grave, in England's anxious years,  
We bring our useless tears.

*Above the throne*; 'He knows that if Princes exist, it is for the good of the people. . . . Well for him that he does so,' was the remark made by an observing foreigner on Prince Albert: (Martin: *Life of H.R.H. the Prince Consort*: ch. xi).

*On home alone*; 'She who reigns over us,' said the then Mr. Disraeli when seconding the Address on the death of the Duchess of Kent, (March, 1861), 'She who reigns over us has elected, amid all the splendour of empire, to establish her life on the principle of domestic love' (Martin: ch. cxi).

*Firm and true*, 'Treu und Fest' is the motto of the Saxe-Coburg family.

p. 181*Goodwill to men*; A revision of the despatch to the Cabinet of the United States, remonstrating on the 'Trent affair,' whilst the fatal fever was on him, was the last of Prince Albert's many services (Nov. 30, 1861) to England. To

the temperate and conciliatory tone which he gave to this message, its success in the promotion of peace between the two countries was largely due: (Martin: ch. cxvi).

ODE

FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST OF JUNE  
1887

. . . *Sunt hic sua praemia laudi,*  
*Sunt lacrimae rerum* . . .

As when the snowdrop from the snowy ground  
Lifting a maiden face, foretells the flowers  
That lurk and listen, till the chaffinch sound  
Spring’s advent with the glistening willow crown’d,  
Sheathed in their silken bowers:—  
E’en so the promise of her life appears  
Through those white childhood-years;  
—Whether in seaside happiness, and air  
Rosing the fair cheek,—sand, and spade, and shell,—  
Or race with sister-feet, that flash’d and fell  
Printing the beach, while the gay comrade-wind  
Play’d in the soft light hair:—  
Or if with sunbeam-smile and kind  
Small hand at cottage-door  
Her simple alms she tender’d to the poor:  
Love’s healthy happy heart in all her steps was seen,  
And God, in life’s fresh springtime, bless’d our Queen.

Lo! the quick months their order’d dance pursue,  
And Spring’s bright apple-blossoms flush to fruit;  
p. 182The bay-tree thrives ’neath Heaven’s own gracious dew,  
And her young shoots the parent-life renew  
Around the fostering root.  
—The Girl from care in youth’s sweet sleep withdrawn  
Wakes to a crown at dawn!  
But Love is at her side, strong, faithful, wise,  
To share the world-wide burden of command,  
The sceptre’s weight in the unlesson’d hand;  
To aid each nursery inmate,—each in turn  
Dear pride of watchful eyes,—  
To clasp the innocent hands, and learn  
The words of love and grace,  
Lifting their souls to the compassionate Face:—  
While o’er the fortunate fold the Shepherd watch’d unseen;  
And home, in all its beauty, bless’d a Queen.

Ah! Happy she, who wedded finds in one  
Wisest and dearest! happy, happy years!  
But summer whirlwinds wait on summer’s sun;  
Where the Five Rivers from Himala run,  
His snow where Everest rears,  
Or Alma’s echoing crags with war-cry wake  
The wind-vext Euxine lake.  
—O Death in myriad forms! O brutal roar  
Of battle! throes of race, and crash of thrones!  
Imploring hands, and wreck of whitening bones  
In Khyber pass;—Or woman’s stifled cry,  
And that dark pit of gore!



—Yet night had light; for He was by,  
Her heart, her strength, her shield,  
Twin-star in the Throne's radiance self-conceal'd;  
Love's hand laid light on hers, guiding the ship unseen—  
For God's best grace in Albert bless'd the Queen.

p. 183But at man's side each hour with ambush'd sword  
Death hurries, nor for prayer nor love delays;  
In God's own time His harvest-sheaves are stored,  
'For My thoughts are not your thoughts,' saith the Lord,  
'Nor are your ways My ways.'  
He Who spared not the Son His bitter cup,  
The broken heart binds up  
In His fit hour, All-Merciful!—And she,  
The desolate faithful Mother, in the nest  
By children's love soft-woven, has found rest;  
Some constant to her side, if some have flown  
The Angels' road, and see  
The Vision of the Eternal Throne:—  
With them, 'tis well!—But thou,  
Strong through submission, to His will dost bow,  
Till God renew the home in that far realm unseen,  
And bless with all her lost ones England's Queen.

Yet in great Nature's changeful mystic dance  
Joy circles grief, gay dawn outsmiles the night:  
'Tis meet our song should build its radiance  
Like some high palace-porch, and walls that glance  
With gold and marble light:  
Now fifty suns 'neath one firm patriot sway  
Have whirl'd their shining way.  
—Lo Commerce with the golden girdling chain  
That links all nations for the good of each;  
While Science boasts her silent lightning speech  
Swifter than thought; and how her patience rein'd  
To post o'er earth and main  
The panting white-breath'd Titan, chain'd  
Bondslave to man:—and won  
The magic spark o'er-dazzling star and sun  
p. 184From its dark cave: for He, the all-seeing Lord unseen  
Enlightening, bless'd the years of England's Queen.

Freedom of England! from thy sacred source  
Where Alfred arm'd in Athelney, welling pure,  
With hero-blood dyed in thy widening course,  
—What loyaler hand than her's to guide thy force  
Down ancient channels sure?  
Honour of England! in what bosom stirs  
Thy soul more quick than her's?  
Yet in her days . . . O greater grief, than when  
In years of woe, the years of happiness  
Flash o'er us,—to behold,—and no redress,—  
Some deed of shame we cannot cure nor stay!  
Our best, our man of men,  
Martyr'd inch-meal by dull delay!  
Ah, sacred, hidden grave!  
Ah gallant comrade feet, love-wing'd to save,  
Too late, too late!—But Thou, Whose counsels work unseen,  
Spare us henceforth such pangs, spare England's Queen

O much enduring, much revered! To thee  
Bring sun-dyed millions love more sweet than fame,  
And happy isles that star the purple sea  
Homage;—and children at the mother’s knee  
With her’s unite thy name;  
And faithful hearts, that throb ’neath palm and pine,  
From East to West, are thine.  
For as some pillar-star o’er sea and storm  
Whole fleets to haven guides, so from that height  
One great example points the path of Right,  
And purifies the home; with gracious aid  
Lifting the fallen form.  
See Death by finer skill delay’d;  
p. 185Kind hearts to wait on woe,  
And feet of Love that in Christ’s footsteps go;  
Wild wastes of life reclaim’d by Woman’s hand unseen:  
All England bless’d with England’s Empress Queen.

And now, as one who through some fruitful field  
Has urged the fifty furrows of the grain,—  
Look round with joy, and know thy care will yield  
A thousandfold in its due day reveal’d,  
The harvest laugh again:—  
E’en now thy great crown’d ancestors on high  
Watch with exultant eye  
Thy hundred Englands o’er the broad earth sown,  
And Arthur lives anew to hail his heir!  
—O then for her and us we chant the prayer,—  
Keep Thou this sea-girt citadel of the free  
Safe ’neath her ancient throne,  
Love-link’d in loyal unity;  
Let eve’s calm after-glow  
Arch all the heaven with Hope’s wide roseate bow:  
Till in Time’s fulness Thou, Almighty Lord unseen,  
With glory and life immortal crown the Queen.

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## ENGLAND ONCE MORE

Old if this England be  
The Ship at heart is sound,  
And the fairest she and gallantest  
That ever sail’d earth round!  
And children’s children in the years  
Far off will live to see  
p. 186Her silver wings fly round the world,  
Free heralds of the free!  
While now on Him who long has bless’d  
To bless her as of yore,  
Once more we cry for England,  
England once more!

They are firm and fine, the masts;  
And the keel is straight and true;  
Her ancient cross of glory  
Rides burning through the blue:—  
And that red sign o’er all the seas

The nations fear and know,  
And the strong and stubborn hero-souls  
That underneath it go:—  
While now on Him who long has bless'd  
To bless her as of yore,  
Once more we cry for England,  
England once more!

Prophets of dread and shame,  
There is no place for you,  
Weak-kneed and craven-breasted,  
Amongst this English crew!  
Bluff hearts that cannot learn to yield,  
But as the waves run high,  
And they can almost touch the night,  
Behind it see the sky.  
While now on Him who long has bless'd  
To bless her as of yore,  
Once more we cry for England,  
England once more!

As Past in Present hid,  
As old transfused to new,  
Through change she lives unchanging,  
To self and glory true;  
p. 187From Alfred's and from Edward's day  
Who still has kept the seas,  
To him who on his death-morn spoke  
Her watchword on the breeze!  
While now on Him who long has bless'd  
To bless her as of yore,  
Once more we cry for England,  
England once more!

What blasts from East and North,  
What storms that swept the land  
Have borne her from her bearings  
Since Caesar seized the strand!  
Yet that strong loyal heart through all  
Has steer'd her sage and free,  
—Hope's armour'd Ark in glooming years,  
And whole world's sanctuary!  
While now on Him who long has bless'd  
To bless her as of yore,  
Once more we cry for England,  
England once more!

Old keel, old heart of oak,  
Though round thee roar and chafe  
All storms of life, thy helmsman  
Shall make the haven safe!  
Then with Honour at the head, and Faith,  
And Peace along the wake,  
Law blazon'd fair on Freedom's flag,  
Thy stately voyage take:—  
While now on Him who long has bless'd  
To bless Thee as of yore,  
Once more we cry for England,  
England once more!

**A: p. 87**

*Till the terrible Day unveil'd*; Much of course is and will probably remain unknown among the details of that fatal and fascinating drama, Mary's life. But all hitherto ascertained evidence has now, mainly by Mr. Hosack, been sifted so closely and so ably that the main turning points in her career seem to have reached that twilight certainty beyond which History can rarely hope to go, and are placed beyond the reach of reasonable controversy. Such, (not to enter upon the Queen's life as Elizabeth's captive), is the more than Macchiavellian—the almost incredible—perfidy of the leading Scottish politicians, united with a hypocrisy more revolting still, and enabled to do its wicked work, (with regret we must confess), by the shortsighted bigotry of Knox:—The gradual forgery of the letters by which the Queen's death was finally obtained from the too-willing hands of Elizabeth's Cabinet:—The all but legally proved innocence of Mary in regard to Darnley's death, and the Bothwell marriage. Taking her life as a whole, it may be fairly doubted whether any woman has ever been exposed to trials and temptations more severe, or has suffered more shamefully from false witness and fanatical hatred. But the prejudices which have been hence aroused are so strong, such great interests, religious and political, are involved in their maintenance, that they will doubtless prevail in the popular mind until our literature receives,—what an age of research and of the scientific spirit should at last be prepared to give us,—a tolerably truthful history of the Elizabethan period. (1889)

**B: p. 102**

*Heroes both;—Each his side*;—In regard to the main issue at stake in the Civil War, and the view taken of it throughout this book, let me here once for all remark that no competent and impartial student of our history can deny a fair cause to each side, whatever errors may have been committed by Charles and by the Parliament, or however fatal for some fifteen years to liberty and national happiness were the excesses and the tyranny into which the victorious party gradually, and as it were inevitably, drifted. 'No one,' says Ranke (whom I must often quote, because to this distinguished foreigner we owe the single, though too brief, narrative of this period in which history has been hitherto, treated historically, that is, without judging of the events by the light either of their remote results, or of modern political party), 'will make any very heavy political charge against Strafford on the score of his government of Ireland, or of the partisan attitude which he had taken up in the intestine struggle in England in general; for the ideas for which he contended were as much to be found in the past history of England as were those which he attacked:' p. 189—and Hampden's conduct may claim analogous justification. If the Parliament could appeal to those mediaeval precedents which admitted the right of the people through their representatives, to control taxation and (more or less) direct national policy, Charles, (and Strafford with him), might as lawfully affirm that they too were standing 'on the ancient ways'; on the royal supremacy undeniably exercised by Henry II or Edward I. by Henry VIII and by Elizabeth. Both parties could equally put forward the prosperity of England under these opposed modes of government: Patriotism, honour, conscience, were watchwords which either might use with truth or abuse with profit. If the great struggle be patiently studied, the moral praise and censure so freely given, according to a reader's personal bias, will be found very rarely justified. There was far, very far, less of tyranny or of liberty involved in the contest, up to 1642, than partisans aver. To the actual actors (nor, as retrospectively criticized by us) it is a fair battle on both sides, not a contest 'between light and darkness.'

We, looking back after two centuries, are of course free to recognize, that one effect of the Tudor despotism had been to train Englishmen towards ruling themselves;—we may agree that the time had come for Lords and Commons to take their part in the Kingdom. But no proof, I think it may be said, can be shown that this great idea, in any conscious sense, governed the Parliaments of James and Charles. It is we who,—reviewing our history since the definite establishment of the constitutional balance after 1688, and the many blessings the land has enjoyed,—can perceive what in the seventeenth century was wholly hidden from Commonwealth and from King. And even if in accordance with the common belief, we ascribe English freedom and prosperity and good government to the final triumph of the popular side, yet deeper consideration should suggest that such retrospective judgments are always inevitably made under our human entire ignorance what might have been the result had the opposite party prevailed. Who should say how often, in case of these long and wide extended struggles,—political and dynastic,—the effects which we confidently claim as *propter hoc*, are only *post hoc* in the last reality?

Waiving however these somewhat remote and what many will judge over-sceptical considerations, this is certain, that unless we can purify our judgment from reading into the history of the past the long results of time;—from ascribing to the men of the seventeenth century prophetic insight into the nineteenth;—unless, in short, we can free ourselves from the chain of present or personal prepossessions;—no approach can be made to a fair or philosophical judgment upon

such periods of strife and crisis as our Civil War preeminently offers.

## **C: p. 108**

*With glory he gilt;* Yet to readers, (if such readers there be) who can look with an undazzled eye on military success, or hear the still small voice of truth through the tempest of rhetoric, Cromwell's foreign policy, (excepting the isolated case of his interference with the then comparatively feeble powers of Savoy and the Papacy on behalf of the persecuted Waldenses), will be far from supporting the credit with which politico-theological partisanship has invested it.

Holland was beyond question the natural ally on political and religious grounds of puritan England. But a mischievous war against her in 1652-3 was caused by the arrogant restrictions of the Navigation p. 190Act of 1651. The successful English demand in 1653 that the Orange family, as connected closely with that of Stuart, should be excluded from the Stadtholdership, was in a high degree to the prejudice of the United Provinces.

In 1654 Cromwell was negotiating with France and Spain. From the latter he arrogantly asked wholly unreasonable terms, whilst Mazarin, on the part of France, offered Dunkirk as a bribe. News opportunely arriving that certain Spanish possessions in America were feebly armed, Cromwell at once declared war: and now, supplementing unscrupulous policy by false theology, announced 'the Spaniards to be the natural and ordained enemies of England, whom to fight was a duty both to country and to religion:' (Ranke: xii. 6).

The piratical war which followed, in many ways similar to that which the 'wise Walpole' tried to avert in 1739, was hardly less impolitic than immoral. It alienated Holland, it sanctioned French aggression on Flanders (xii. 7), it ended by giving Mazarin and Lewis XIV that supremacy in Western Europe for which England had to pay in the wars of William III and Anne; whilst, as soon as it was over, France naturally allied herself with Spain, on a basis which might have caused the union of the two crowns (xii. 8) and which allowed Spain at once to support Charles II. As the result of the Protector's 'spirited policy' England thus figured as the catspaw of France, and the enemy of European liberty.

It is satisfactory, however, to find that, in Ranke's judgment, the common modern opinion that Cromwell's despotism was favourably regarded in England because of his foreign enterprize, is exaggerated. Even against the conquest of Jamaica,—his single signal gain,—unanswerable arguments were popularly urged at the time: (xii. 4, 8)—But the Protectorate, in the light of modern research,—like the reign of Elizabeth,—still awaits its historian.

## **D: p. 127**

*The sky by a veil;* 'A spiritual world,' says a critic of deep insight, 'over and above this invisible one, is a most important addition to our idea of the universe; but it does not of itself touch our moral nature. . . . Its moral effect depends entirely upon what we make that world to be.'—Cromwell's religion, which may be profitably studied in his letters and speeches, (much better known of, than read) reveals itself there as the simple reflex of his personal views: it had great power to animate, little or none to regulate or control his impulses. He had, indeed, a most real and pervading 'natural turn for the invisible; he thought of the invisible till he died; but the cloudy arch only canopied a field of human aim and will.'

*The horrible sacrament;* The summary of Cromwell's conduct at Drogheda by a writer of so much research, impartiality, and philosophic liberality as Mr. Lecky deserves to be well considered.

'The sieges of Drogheda and Wexford, and the massacres that accompanied them, deserve to rank in horror with the most atrocious exploits of Tilly and Wallenstein, and they made the name of Cromwell eternally hated in Ireland. It even now acts as a spell upon the Irish mind, and has a powerful and living influence in sustaining the hatred both of England and Protestantism. The massacre of Drogheda acquired a deeper horror and a special significance from the saintly professions and the religious phraseology of its perpetrators, and the town p. 191where it took place is, to the present day, distinguished in Ireland for the vehemence of its Catholicism.' (*Hist. of Eighteenth Cent.* ch. vi).

*Mortal failure;* The ever-increasing unsuccess of Cromwell's career is forcibly set forth by Ranke (xii. 8). He had 'crushed every enemy,—the Scottish and the Presbyterian system, the peers and the king, the Long Parliament and the Cavalier insurgents,—but to create . . . an organization consistent with the authority which had fallen to his own lot, was beyond his power. Even among his old' Anabaptist and Independent 'friends, his comrades in the field, his colleagues in the establishment of the Commonwealth, he encountered the most obstinate resistance. . . . At no time were the prisons fuller; the number of political prisoners was estimated at 12,000 . . . The failure of his plans soured and distracted him.' It was, in fact, wholly 'beyond his power to consolidate a tolerably durable political constitution.'—To the disquiet caused by constant attempts against Cromwell's life, Ranke adds the death of his favourite daughter, Lady

Claypole, whose last words of agony ‘were of the right of the king, the blood that had been shed, the revenge to come.’

## **E: p. 146**

*Unheirlike heir*; Richard Cromwell has received double measure of that censure which the world’s judgment too readily gives to unsuccess, finding favour neither from Royalists nor Cromwellians. Macaulay, with more justice, remarks, ‘That he was a good man he evinced by proofs more satisfactory than deep groans or long sermons, by humility and suavity when he was at the height of human greatness, and by cheerful resignation under cruel wrongs and misfortunes.’ . . . ‘He did nothing amiss during his short administration.’

His fall may be traced to several causes: to the fact that the puritan party proper, who supported him, the ‘sober men’ mentioned by Baxter ‘that called his father no better than a traitorous hypocrite,’ had not power to resist the fanatic cabal of army chiefs: to the necessity he was under of protecting some justly-odious confederates of Oliver: his own want of ability or energy to govern,—a point fully recognized during Oliver’s supremacy; and to his own honourable decision not to ‘have a drop of blood shed on his poor account.’ Yet there is ample evidence to show that Richard, had he chosen, might have made a struggle to retain the throne,—sufficient, at least, to have thus deluged the kingdom.

Richard’s life was passed in great quiet after 1660: Charles II, according to Clarendon, with a wise and humorous lenity, not thinking it ‘necessary to inquire after a man so long forgotten.’ His letters reveal a man of affectionate and honest disposition; he uses the Puritan phraseology of the day without leaving a sense of nausea in the reader’s mind. At Hursley he was buried at a good old age in 1712.

## **F: p. 152**

*A nation’s craven rage*; The want of public spirit in England shown during the war of 1745-6 is astonishing. ‘England,’ wrote Henry Fox, ‘is for the first comer . . . Had 5,000 [French troops] landed in any part of this island a week ago, I verily believe the entire conquest of it would not have cost them a battle.’ And other weighty testimonies might be added, in support of Lord Mahon’s view as to the great probability of the Prince’s success, had he been allowed by his followers to march upon London from Derby.

This apathy and the panic which followed found their natural issue in the sanguinary punishment of the followers of Prince Charles. ‘The city and the generality,’ wrote H. Walpole in August, 1746, ‘are very angry that so many rebels have been pardoned.’ The vindictive cruelty then shown makes, in truth (if we compare the magnitude and duration of the rebellion for which punishment was to be exacted), an unsatisfactory contrast to the leniency of 1660. But History supplies only too numerous proofs that a century’s march in civilisation may be always undone at once by the demons of Panic or of Party in the hour of their respective triumphs.

## **G: p. 169**

*Ripe to wed with Liberty*; Looking at the American War of Independence without party-passion and distortion, as should now at least be possible to Englishmen, the main cause must be acknowledged to lie simply in the growth and geographical position of the Colonies, which had brought them to the age of natural liberty, and had begun to fit them for its exercise:—facts which it was equally in accordance with nature that the Fatherland should fail to perceive. For the causes which gradually determined American resistance we must look, (as regards us), not to the blundering English legislation after 1760,—to the formalism of Grenville, the subterfuges of Franklin,—but to the whole course of our commercial policy since the Revolution: As regards the Colonies, to the extinction of the power of France in America by the Treaty of Paris in 1763: (Lecky: ch. v; Mahon: ch. xliii).

The Stamp Act of 1765 brought home, indeed, to a rapidly-developing people the supremacy claimed across the Atlantic; but the obnoxious taxation which it imposed, (despite the splendid sophistry of Chatham), cannot be shown to differ essentially from the trade restrictions and monopolies enacted in long series after 1688, as the result of the predominance obtained at the Revolution by the commercial classes in this country, and which so far as 1765 the colonies openly recognized as legal.

Going, however, beyond these minor motives, the true cause was unquestionably that the time for separate life, for America to be herself, had come. This was a crisis which home-legislation could do little to create or to avert: a natural law, which only worked itself out ostensibly by political manœuvres and military operations, so ill-managed as to be rarely creditable to either side;—and, regarded simply as a ‘struggle for existence,’ is, in the eye of impartial history, hardly within the scope of praise or censure.

But it was a neutrally tinted background like this, which could most effectually bring into full relief the great qualities of the one great man who was prominent in the conflict.

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