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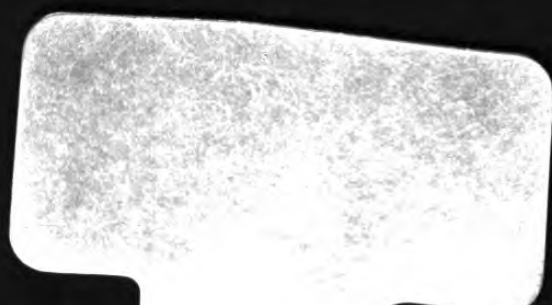


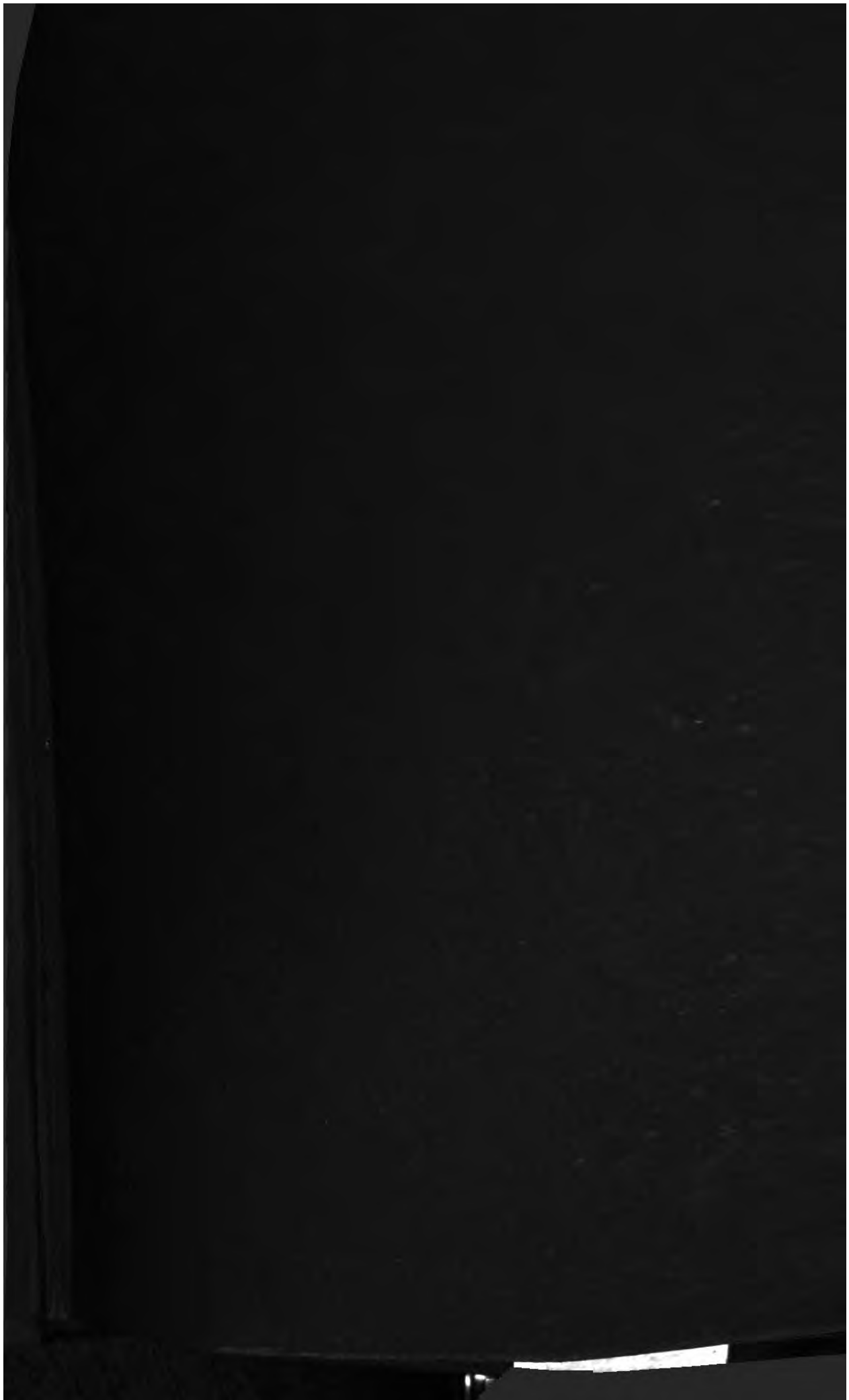
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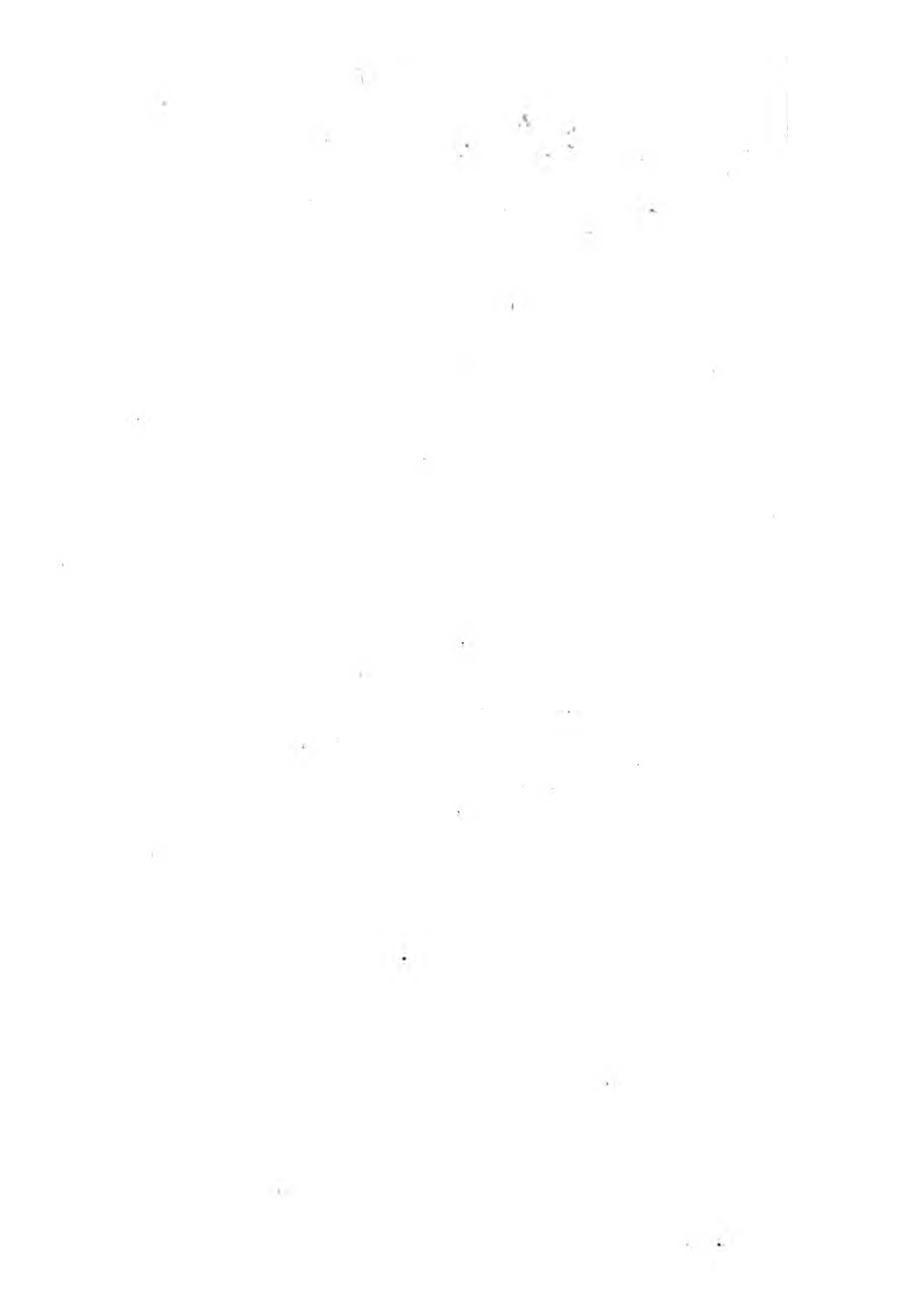




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**LEGENDS OF A STATE PRISON.**

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# LEGENDS OF A STATE PRISON;

OR,

## Visions of the Tower.

By PATRICK SCOTT, Esq.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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# FIRST VISIT.



## FIRST VISIT.



“ **B**EHOLD it rising on our eyes  
Through the thick air of the o’erpeopled town ;  
A history—stereotyped in stone—  
Of human nature, handed down  
Through misty ages, for the wise  
To ponder, and the good bemoan.  
A palace for the oppressor now,  
And now a prison for the oppress’d ;  
Or, set to lift its warning brow,  
And in his forward fling arrest  
The London citizen, ready still  
To fight with every fancied ill.

Cells honeycomb its walls to hold  
Each hated or suspected thing ;  
To mulct a noble of his gold,  
Or hide an inconvenient king.  
Turret and ditch and walk and green,  
Chapel and bastion mixed, bear part  
In a picturesque medley, making a scene  
To please the eye, tho' it pains the heart ;  
Rebel and Royalist floating in pride  
Their flags on its height at the turn of tide."

" Yes," answered Elliot, "'tis too true  
That history is, as St. John said,  
Written on these walls, but all in red,  
And its worst pages spread to view.  
If the first William first laid deep  
The basement of this royal keep,  
Its annals shew it fit to be  
A Norman tyrant's progeny.

The deeds in its dark precincts done  
Might help to make tradition good,  
Which saith, that many a dungeon-stone  
Was set in mortar slaked with blood."

"Complete the picture," Russell cried,  
"And add that Rochester supplied  
A bishop—a most useful man  
Whose mind could stoop from Heaven to plan  
A worthy portion, if not all,  
Of warlike tower and prison-wall."

So spake three persons, pleasure-bound ;  
For pleasure may e'en here be found  
By those whose hearts, not eyes, survey  
The stream of life pursue its way,  
Whether through flowery plains it run  
Placidly 'neath a sparkling sun,  
Or between gloomy banks confined  
It lose its purpose, doomed to find



'Mid weeds and rocks no natural course,  
Choked by neglect or wrung by force.

And on and in and round they walked,  
And walking mused, and musing talked.

Cried Elliot, "How at Fancy's will

The veil of Time is drawn aside.

In long procession down this hill

I see a troop of phantoms glide :

Some headless stalk, and others trail

The chains that wore the body bare ;

Some young, with faces old and pale

From poison of the prison-air ;

And some whose life would soon have flown

From the old frames, if left alone.

Others hold crowns within their hands,

Viewing them with reproachful glance ;

Of varied sex, from various lands,

Stern Scotland, and light-thoughted France,

And merry England—merry!—Lo  
These spectres! did they find it so?—  
On silently, with ghastly gaze,  
    And maimed and bleeding forms they steal,  
Or to the frowning Heavens upraise  
    Their skeleton hands in mute appeal.  
Where are the victims now? Where those  
Who made them? Will they ne'er repose?—  
The first through ages doomed to show  
The signals of their earthly woe;  
The others to behold and hear  
With shuddering eye and sickening ear,  
Bruised limbs, and open wounds, and, worse,  
From motionless lips the endless 'curse?'

Then St. John cried, "These walls have seen  
Strange sights in the long years between  
The time when they and Richard saw  
The mob of Tyler and of Straw

Rage numerous near, or force their way  
In lesser band within, and slay  
The heads of Church and State, until  
The Tower, so often stained by ill,  
Opened its bloody jaws for good,  
And closed them upon Thistlewood.

Now turn and see, beneath that tower  
A water-passage, and o'erhead  
The 'Traitor's Gate!' The maw of Power  
Was by that gloomy entrance fed —  
An entrance which the many knew,  
An exit for, alas! how few!  
All traitors, doubtless, since they were  
Weaker than they who sent them there.  
Recall the past. Behold, beneath  
That dreaded porch, a single barge  
Is entering with its freight of death.  
One prisoner is its only charge,  
And that a woman; youthful too,  
Fair as the morn, and fresh as dew,

And she a Queen. Why, tyrant, make  
This immolation of her charms?  
Can this be done that thou may'st take  
Another to thy brawny arms?  
None but some few, in wherries seated,  
Poor sailors, see her pass that gate,  
And they too scared to mourn her fate;  
She, whom so late a nation greeted  
With multitudinous throat when bound  
For this same Tower, before that, crown'd,  
She graced the throne on which she sat.  
Look on this picture, then on that:  
From Greenwich to the Tower, her way  
Was marked by pomp, and met with joy;  
The sun illumed that golden day,  
None fear'd th' eclipse, none saw th' alloy.  
Barges one hundred, and half more,  
Convoyed her. Every steeple rang:  
Men lined the streets and ships the shore,  
And banners waved, and minstrels sang,

And, the loud cannon-peals between,  
The people cried, ' Long live the Queen !'  
Long life ! enough ! Her charms have fed  
Her husband's fickle appetite,  
Which wants fresh food. Then strike her head  
From off her. Hide her out of sight.  
Fronting St. Peter's altar-screen  
Make her a grave. Long live the Queen !

“ What were her sins ? Not that one made  
The pretext for the headsman's blade,  
But dreams of an ambitious youth  
That somewhat warped the heart from truth ;  
Light movement, and coquettish glance,  
And airy manners fetch'd from France,  
Where more is acted than intended—  
Slight faults to be so rudely mended !

“ When on the murderous block she laid  
Her little neck, ' O ! Thou,' she said,

‘ Who art the Way, the Truth, the Life,  
Knowest that I, the harsh-judged wife,  
Do not deserve this judgment.’—Then,  
As echoed by recording years,  
We, with each Christian man that hears  
That faint appeal, respond ‘ Amen ! ’ ”

“ Could men,” said Elliot, “ wish to be  
Impartial in their cruelty,  
And vary carnage, that it hold  
In one red clutch both young and old ?—  
Here lieth, cognate with the Crown,  
The last pure-born Plantagenet ;  
Grand-daughter of the man who set  
Kings upon thrones, or dragged them down.  
What matter, guiltless, and grey-haired,—  
Nor innocence nor age was spared,  
As Margaret of Salisbury found  
The fate her royal father met,  
When that mysterious dungeon-ground  
Reeked with the blood of Clarence wet,

And groans and shrieks had little power

To tell what never will be told,—

The deed done in that dark-groined hold

Within the base of Bowyer's tower.

Her scaffold rose upon the green—

What, Geoffrey Pole, was then thy thought ?

Thy window opened on that scene—

Thou sawest—'twas thy speech that brought,

Or helped to bring, thy mother there,

With her bent form and scanty hair.

She will not calmly stoop to die,

And calls for aid, and seeks to fly.

The headsman follows on her tread,

Still striking at her hoary head,

Missing by turns, by turns he hits

And gashes out the life by bits.”

On went the three men sadly—each

Was too shut up in thought for speech,

For every spot was prompt to wake  
Memories most dark. Then St. John spake :

“ How all the place around us swarms

With too true visions steeped in pain ;  
From every side rise dusky forms,

Whose varied woes distract the brain  
To judge which is the worst. Give ear,

My friends ! To mark our visit here,

Let us, each one whose pitying breast

Selects a victim from the rest,

Embalm in sympathetic song

The recollection of his wrong.

It may be that these tales will spread

Like palls, to consecrate the dead.”

This pleased them all. This every one

Agreed to do, and so 'twas done,

And when, some little time being fled,

At St. John's home they met, he said,

“ Behold my tale,” and thus he read :—





JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND.



## JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND.



O'ER the sea, o'er the foam-tipped sea,  
A ship is speeding, with wings outspread  
To the faithless gales off Flamborough Head ;  
    Like a bird that would fain be free  
From hands stretch'd forth to bar its way,  
The vessel dips through the ocean spray.  
Straight for the coast of France it sails ;  
    But still more straight and quickly they,  
    Treading its wet decks, wish it to fly ;  
    For men weigh things impatiently  
When life is in the scales.

Look! or, should not thy heart be brave,  
Look not where over the weltering wave,  
Borne swiftly on by the favouring blast,  
Another vessel comes fierce and fast.  
Armed to the full, like a hawk let slip  
At a heron, on that defenceless ship  
Downward it swoops: unfit to fight,  
Its prey is only armed for flight,  
Yet cannot fly, and yields, as most  
Have yielded, from the self-same cause,  
When might is stronger than right or laws,  
And is borne away to the English coast.

Then Orkney's stout Earl, as he eyed  
The sword stretch'd idly by his side,  
Demurely said, "From out the snare,  
Laid long-time in our Scotland there,  
The royal bird hath 'scaped, and yet  
It falls into another net

Not spread for it. But who will break  
The news to him who dreams his son  
Is resting in a refuge won,  
And cause the old king's heart to ache ? ”

But the young boy, whose life had seen  
Ten summers or so, cried out, “ I ween  
Things might have turned out worse, my lord !  
Far better can I at least afford  
To trust King Henry than to be  
At home with my uncle Albany.  
In jail or palace I have small fear  
That I shall sicken on English cheer.  
Would my starved brother had chanced to win  
Like favour from his Scottish kin ! ”

And both the Earl and the Prince in sooth,  
Speaking of ill and good, spoke truth ;

For Rothesay Castle heard a bitter wail  
From aged lips, when the quick-travelling tale  
Of his son's capture reached the monarch's ears.

Three days, three nights, he cried out, "Such the end!

Such my prophetic fears!

Have I no faithful friend

To rid me of this life? Stern Heaven! bereft  
Of him, my eldest, must not one be left

To glad my discrowned hours forlorn?

Where is my second-born?

My son—where is my son?" Three days he cried,  
Three nights, and to that question none replied;  
But as the fourth dawn shed a sombre ray  
Where the third Robert unlamenting lay,  
The voice was hushed—the soul had passed away.

Earl Orkney, plunged in anxious thought  
Of what might happen there, was brought  
To England; but the royal boy,  
His charge, found novelty a joy.

And when the heralds came to bring  
The Prince to Court, he went, and bore  
Himself in kingly sort before  
Henry of Lancaster, the King.

The self-made Ruler smiled to trace  
Th' incipient monarch in his face,  
And took him kindly by the hand,  
And cried, " Be satisfied to have  
All that thy utmost wish shall crave  
But this—to leave our English land ;  
And in meantime thou shalt be nurst  
To bear an empire—men should be  
Trained to endure their royalty—  
Till Scotland hail thee James the First ! "

And Henry kept his word. He deemed  
That kings should be the things they seemed ;  
Not merely rise above the rest  
As higher placed, and better drest,



And both in peace and battle fray  
Should show their subject hosts the way.  
So 'twas that James, the youthful, laid  
Foundation for the good that made  
The full-grown man more fitly grace  
The throne than others of his race.

He, on well-riden steed, was found  
Aye foremost in the tilting-ground ;  
Or, trained to wrestling, could lay low,  
With graceful strength, his friendly foe ;  
Or arrow to the butt let fly,  
Low levelled, to its golden eye.

His speech was framed with balanced art  
To win the head, or warm the heart ;  
Music and mirth by turns beguiled

The leisure which his prudence made,  
And every Muse benignly smiled  
Upon the court their votary paid.

Two years within the Tower he spent;  
And dance, with feast and tournament,  
And Science, and what Greece and Rome  
Had left for learning, made his home  
As pleasant to a man not free  
As such a doleful place could be.

Two years—and then he was transferred  
(More happy than the royal bird  
That droops, howe'er you shift its cage,  
Or shut it round with bars of gold)  
To Windsor, where his growing age  
Had more inducement to unfold.

Years unto years were added there.  
Guarded, he strolled in regal wood,  
Or filled his health with upland air,  
Or gazed in reverential mood  
On Nature's charms, when sunset dies  
Slowly in variegated skies,  
Or the wide-ruling sun is born  
From the grey womb-cloud of the morn,

And hill and dale and river spread  
Seem lengthening to the Heav'n o'erhead.  
The wealth of Nature's soul, when grown,  
He had transplanted to his own ;  
And the seed-life the boy began  
Was ripened richly in the man.

Of bye-gone wisdom, as he read,  
His thirsting spirit daily drank,  
And there, amid the mighty dead,  
Boethius held a foremost rank.  
Then, too, his soul was grieved that he,  
Whose only crime it was to feel  
His country's wrongs too well, should be  
The victim of that righteous zeal ;  
That such a life, because it crost  
Theodoric's movements, should be lost.  
He thought how, calm from hour to hour,  
Close fettered, in Pavia's tower,

With the best feelings of the sage  
Boethius stamped his deathless page ;  
Its reasoning to the mind how clear !  
How pure its language to the ear !  
And which great Alfred, as it stood,  
Made Saxon for his country's good.  
How well and sweetly did he talk  
With Wisdom in his daily walk ;  
And how she taught him to employ  
His thoughts in making God his joy,  
His one delight. He seemed to roll  
    The curtain up from earth that veiled  
His view of heaven, where soon his soul  
    Would enter, by its angels hailed.

And James, too, learnt as History spread  
    Her lessons to his curious eyes ;  
And once when Night o'er half the skies  
Had driven her sombre car, he read

The hateful tale of civil strife  
'Twixt Edward and his wolfish wife.  
For France, he thought, from monsters nurst  
    In her wild woods, and brute-like men  
Had gathered up whate'er was worst  
    In different natures round, and then  
Had made a spirit that would not rest—  
The devil in Isabella's breast.  
The food that never seemed to pall  
    Was blood ; and when she well had fed,  
She filled each hideous interval  
    With joys of an adulterous bed.

Yet the second Edward, though ill-starr'd,  
Made his own fate, however hard.  
Wanton of mind, in act a fool,  
    He played a most unkingly part ;  
Unfit for a great kingdom's rule,  
    Unworthy of a woman's heart ;

He showed in that tumultuous time  
A weakness almost worse than crime.

But James read on ; then, with a look  
Of fear and loathing, shut the book,  
And cried aloud, " If such the fare  
Served up by marriage, who would dare  
To taste the deleterious food  
On chance of an unlikely good ? "

And next he sat him down to write  
The ideas that crowded on his brain,  
And, 'mid the undisturbing night,  
Thought upon thought in lengthening train  
Assailed his mind, until it grew  
Flushed by the pictures which it drew.  
Then would he register a vow  
'Gainst woman and her wedded love,  
To live alone as he was now,  
When something near him seemed to move,

And Silence gently sighed, as 'twere ;—  
'Twas fancy, or the entering air.  
He laughed at his own fears, enclosed  
    In one lone room, as he was then ;  
But next a hand was interposed  
    Betwixt the paper and the pen  
With which, in rash resolve, he thought  
To stamp his unromantic thought.  
A female hand it was, with all  
That makes up beauty, white and small,  
And finely-shaped ; and as he tried  
    Again and once again to write,  
The delicate hand returned to hide  
    The parchment from his puzzled sight.  
One finger was raised up, and on  
Its taper length a gold ring shone,  
Displaying in its central part  
A ruby shaped into a heart.  
He stopt deterred—his purpose crost  
    By violence of a natural law.

The vision fled, but he ne'er lost  
The memory of the thing he saw.  
Months died, as months had died before,  
But hope for ever lived—once more  
To see that hand, and almost grew  
To wishing for the body too.

One morning, James in his grey tower  
Sat at his window, to inhale,  
Not free himself, the freshening gale,  
That toyed at will with fruit and flower.  
The casement open stood ; its bars,  
Which shut from outward life their charge,  
Let in the view of nightly stars ;  
And of a garden fair and large  
By day, with all the sights and sounds  
Reposing in its quiet bounds.  
Between the flower-plots filled with scent,  
And round them too, broad alleys went ;



And at the corners where they met  
Arbours of trellis-work were set.  
A hawthorn-hedge, with intergrowth  
Of junipers, enclosed them both.

He laid, with sorrow overgrown,  
His head awry on the cold stone,  
And cried, " All wants I here possess  
    But one thing which that roving bee  
Enjoys in full. If I have less  
    Than this, what have I more than he ?  
Nay, have I not the opened mind  
Which can hold converse with its kind,  
And which much culture hath made fit  
For intercourse of wish and wit?—  
And yet that one thing wanting sours  
The sweets of solitary hours,  
For, 'tis a day—a beaming day ;  
See, lovers all, and worship May !

The calends of your bliss begun,  
Date from the season and the sun.  
The small birds ply their anxious wing,  
Drest in new feathers by the spring,  
And each, in shrill-tuned voice elate,  
Thanks love and weather for its mate.  
What is this Love, this King of Earth ?  
The power of counterfeited mirth  
Which books discourse of ? Is it real,  
Or a fantastic false ideal ?  
Make me, O Love ! if god thou art,  
Free as the bird upon the bough ;  
And when my chains are off, I vow,  
Thou shalt replace them on my heart.

“ And have I not a heart to glow  
With grateful passion ? and ”—but here,  
Startled, he stopt and gazed, for lo !  
A graceful form came floating near,

As now with song and now with talk,  
She loitered down the garden walk.  
That she hath rank and worldly state  
He deems, for two attendants wait  
Upon her will. Her hair confined  
In a pearl net, forbids the wind  
To rudely scatter tress from tress,  
Sprinkled with golden dust. Her dress  
Is a white tissue, looped, and meet  
To show her pretty-stepping feet.

To his heart backward rushed the blood,  
And, rooted like a tree, he stood,  
Filled by the golden-arrowed boy  
With a new knowledge and a joy.

A small-limbed greyhound from whose neck  
Hang jangling bells, is at her beck ;  
And from his gambols round, when cried  
By name, comes fawning to her side,

But see ! he starts, he stares, his cheek  
Grows pale—the cause not far to seek ;  
For round her own fair neck behold  
A jewel, hung by chain of gold,  
Heart-shaped and with a ruby gleam,  
Larger than that which in his dream  
He saw, and longed to see again,  
Upon her hand. His labouring brain  
Asks for no more, content to greet  
Such prophecy, though half-complete.

Nearer she comes. She plucks a flower,  
'Gainst the barred window of his tower  
His white face strains, then turns to flame ;  
He sees her hand—it is the same  
He saw before, of rings though bare :  
'Twas left for him to place one there !  
He heaves a sigh—a complex sigh  
Of admiration and regret.  
Alas ! he cannot get more nigh—  
Far off as Heaven, he'd love her yet.

She hears, and turns her gaze above ;

Her eyes find his, and silently

They seal a compact ne'er to die

As long as life allows for love.

This compact he, in the old way

Of lovers' law, renews each day,

By passion-prompted lines, let fall

From window-sill, forgetting all

The lessons History taught of late

Of Isabella and her mate.

And be the weather foul or fair,

She seems to like that garden air ;

While he, in corresponding strain,

Aye celebrates his faithful Jane.

Thus, by prophetic fancy fired,

He told the tale which Love inspired.

It was the time, methought, when Cynthia rinsed

In black Aquarius her gold-tressèd hair ;

I pined, for much my busy spirit winced  
Beneath long thrall. Sleep seized me unaware,  
Or maybe swoon, and on a garden fair  
I seemed to gaze where things more rich in hue  
Than a king's clothing, nature-vested grew.

One flower conspicuous sparkled ruby-red,  
And to the soft wind bent with wondrous grace ;  
But, as it raised its petal-crownèd head,  
A flower no more, it showed a woman's face  
On human shape. "The Goddess of this place  
Art thou," I cried, "whose beauties, that enslave  
My simple heart, might cause a world to rave?"

Her hair with pearly fretwork was enclosed,  
And gold-bespangled ; on its top a crown  
Of blossoms, red and white and blue, reposed.  
Her morning robe flowed negligently down,  
A single clasp confined the floating gown ;  
While in the scarf that veiled her breast above  
Shame held its hand before the gaze of love.

Then turning at a sudden sound, I spied

A heavenly form clipt in a crystal cloud,  
A rosy boy was nestling by her side  
All plumed with wings. "O thou!" I cried aloud,  
"Venus divine!"—but at a sign I bowed  
My head and listened while she spoke, "The cure  
Of Cupid's wounds by me alone is sure.

"She whom thou first did'st look on, like to thee  
Is mortal; but if thou would'st pluck and wear  
This beauteous flower, thy amorous suit must be  
Approved by Wisdom, for things seeming fair  
May be foul inwards." Then to vision there  
A second form arose, as if the skies  
Had been uncurtained to a mortal's eyes.

A golden helmet on her head she wore,  
Which gave her beauty a strange look, severe,  
It would not else have had. Then she: "Before

Thy love may prosper in its claims, nor fear  
Bad end when granted, it must be as clear  
From wicked filth, as waves that break in green  
On the far shore of some unvisited scene."

Then I: "I swear by Christ's redeeming cross  
Where my best hopes do hang, and there alone,  
Without that flower all gain to me were loss.  
'Tis the first passion that my heart hath grown;  
No second seed can in that breast be sown.  
The soul that burns with one unwavering flame  
Reflects on earth the heaven from which it came."

She smiled and said, "I see thy heart, and know  
Its love is purer than a passing lust:  
But first to Destiny Celestial go,  
Whom fools call Fortune; from her lips thou must  
Obtain consent. For children of the dust,  
As ye two are, no joy can be, unless  
She breathes the fiat which alone can bless."



Then on my view, as if from air condensed,

There did begin by slow degrees to steal

A female form, whose changing face dispensed

Smiles mixed with frowns, to slay and wound and heal;

And at her feet a rough revolving wheel

On which a clambering crowd aye sought to rise

With trips and knocks and oaths and prayers and cries.

Beneath the wheel a pit yawned black and deep,

Wherein at times the slippery climbers fell,

No more emerging. From the topmost steep

Some tumbled down, when all seemed going well,

And lay loud groaning. It were long to tell

How some she left, and others from the ground

Raised up, and set them once more on the round.

Turning to me she said, "Thou art in truth

A very seely wretch, long held in thrall,

From friends sequestered, with thy strength and youth

Faded and fretted, and shut out from all

The joys of life that men 'good fortune' call.

I'll help thee on the wheel to make amends—  
Hold fast ! To stay there, on thyself depends."

Then did she lift me up and cry, "Begin !

Thy revolution must one hour endure :

Perform thy task, and thou thy wish shalt win :

The wounds which Love inflicted Love shall cure."

But on that wheel my hold seemed little sure,  
And such a rumbling shook each mighty spoke  
I shrieked with fear, and fainted, and awoke.

One morn as I this vision sat to write,

A dove flew o'er my open window-sill,

And 'lighted on my hand. Its wings were white,

A stalk of gilliflower was in its bill,

Upon whose leaves, in golden letters bright,

Was graven, " Lover, waken ! wake and sing !

For, to thy comfort, sure good news I bring."



Then did my hope climb high, and unto Heaven  
Kneeling, on grateful knees I poured my praise,  
That unto me so sweet an end had given  
Of solitary nights and prison-days,  
'Twas kind to sink if only so to raise.  
Here first I saw—here must I learn the art  
To pluck that flower, and lay it on my heart !

The course of a true love was this,  
Which *did* run smoothly on to bliss ;  
Whatever rocks beset its way  
To dash it rudely into spray,  
Or foul its lucid depths, or stem  
Its flow, were not placed there by them !

Over Windsor's royal grounds,  
Hark to the bell that merrily sounds !  
Love seemeth to say therein, " Come, see  
A princely pair made happy by me—



Me who can kindle a flame, to catch  
The train ready laid  
In man and maid,  
'Neath palace-roof or a cottage thatch."

Lo! where first of a noble train  
Stand Scottish James and English Jane.  
Tie the knot—make the willing bondage sure.  
Mitre and helm in mixed array,  
And veil and coronet grace the day ;  
And he who gives the bride away  
Is Henry of Agincour !  
The tie that made Jane Beaufort one  
With Scotland's monarch, was never in life  
In a passing thought or a wish undone ;  
And James, who with gold  
Bought his freedom, sold  
His heart in change for the heart of a wife !  
And Henry, maybe, thought beside  
To satisfy a politic want

In making James and Jane allied :

Her the great-grandchild of old Gaunt,  
And him the heir of Scotland's throne.  
Such union might compose the tone  
Of the two nations, each tow'rd each,  
And fill the never-filled up breach  
Betwixt them, and efface the scars—  
The memories of their border wars.

Yet good is slow, and not before  
King Henry's warlike soul had fled  
Was the young Prince set free to tread  
His native soil once more.

Into Prince James's soul the muse  
Of Poesy did so infuse  
Her passionate spirit, that to him  
The future did not loom so dim  
As unto colder minds—or say  
He gave imagination play  
Like other bards, and took for true  
The pictures that his fancy drew.

However, ere he northward sped

In answer to his people's call,

And placed upon his youthful head

The crown his father wore, with all

The perils sown on either hand,

The growth of a half-cultured land—

One midnight—when such marvels seem

To happen mostly—he beheld

In waking vision or in dream

A female figure, closely-veiled,

And slimly tall, draw near and cry—

Her hand raised upwards as she spake—

“King that may'st be! Futurity

Permits thee a life's choice to take.

Remain in England—should this please,

Thine shall be days spun out in ease

In a long thread, and slowly worn

By age and use, not rudely torn :

But—seek thy country—work and fame,

Good done, and all that's in a name

Bequeathed for future times to say,  
‘ If half what History holds to view  
Of the first James’s deeds be true,  
Worse men than he have had their day,’  
These shall be thine, with bitterer fate  
Of life cut midway short by hate.”

Then James beholds two pictures there  
Drawn on the canvas of the air.  
One represents each peaceful scene  
Of garden trimmed, and country green ;  
Or social feast and friendly talk,  
Sound sleep and meditative walk ;  
And all the joys that strew with flowers  
The pathway of inglorious hours.  
Then an old man, white-haired and propt  
In a soft chair, to sit and smile  
At his grandchildren’s gambols, while  
The works of life have well-nigh stopt

Which threescore years ago were new ;  
Now just worn out with idle wear,  
And when they are, none but the few  
Within a narrow ring will care.

Next, in the second picture, crowned,  
And on a throne, himself he sees ;  
And knights and nobles gather round,  
And bow their heads and bend their knees.

But upon many a face there dwells  
A scowl—the passion-cloud which tells  
That, soon or late, when time shall call,  
Th' exterminating bolt will fall.

Plainly it speaks, and speaketh thus—

“ This king is not the king for us.

Reforms, so titled, that curtail

The power that dwells 'neath coat of mail ;

That insolently interfere

Betwixt the peasant and the peer ;



Which punish every outrage done  
By noblest born, or villain's son ;  
And say, the Law alone shall strike—  
These things are not the things we like.”

But the scene melts, and leaves no trace—  
When lo! a bedroom takes its place,  
With roof thick-set on ponderous beams,  
While light through narrow windows streams.  
Upon the bed a form lies stiff,  
And torn with well-placed wounds, as if  
The men who dealt hard measure knew  
Beforehand what they came to do.  
’Tis his own form : the head, discrown’d,  
Is compassed with a glory round,  
As ’twere a people’s love e’en now  
Had gathered o’er the corpse’s brow.

James saw, and seeing, understood  
These mixed displays of ill and good.

He felt what England was to him ;  
The present bright, the future dim,  
If he should seek, in venturing forth,  
A rugged welcome from the North ;  
And knowing all the vision meant—  
The bitter end of going—went.

And so it was. And should we ask,  
What matter if the finished task—  
The task of fifteen years, assigned  
By Him who sees where we are blind—  
Was followed by a rude death, such  
As his?—it may not matter much.  
But it was much in James—'tis yet  
For all, too, in high places set,  
The chance of ruling well and long ;  
    To foster all things that refined  
    The church's heart, or taught its mind ;  
To raise the weak, control the strong ;  
Draw out the cords, repair the flaws  
Of the old net-work of the laws,

To largely catch, and safely hold  
Unruptured by the weight of gold.

'Twas at the time of Christmas yule,  
When love and thankful joy should rule  
In memory of the saving Birth  
That made Heaven possible to earth,  
When Perthshire saw the deed which stained  
    That festal time with hateful gore,  
And James the useful fell, and rained  
    His life out on its convent floor ;  
Though his brave wife did interpose  
Her slight form to the showering blows,  
And Catherine Douglas' arm, before  
It brake there, barred the entrance-door.

He who first struck him was no less  
    Than the King's uncle. Which is worse—  
To die for half a land to bless,  
    Or live, like Athole, for its curse ?

Three days upon his brows was set  
A fire-hot iron coronet.  
This title o'er his head they hung,  
    “The King of traitors !” The fourth day  
They lopt it from its trunk, and flung  
    The relics, like a rag, away.

Peace to the royal bard whose lyre  
    In Scottish homes so sweetly rang !  
When young from old, and son from sire,  
    Learnt what their common fathers sang.  
How much of all the mellowed worth  
    That makes a nation's music, since  
Those times till now, derives its birth  
    From James the First, her minstrel-Prince !



SECOND VISIT.



## SECOND VISIT.



A SECOND time the three men bent  
Their steps to the old Tower ; and first  
Spake Russell : “ How each spot seems meant  
For men and deeds when at their worst.  
Long passages in secret run,  
For steps that would be secret, round ;  
Damp massy rooms shut out the sun,  
And cells are never reached by sound.  
Here men grew old, and scarcely saw  
The stones their constant treading wore ;  
And women shrieked for help, and heard  
Their own cries echoed, and no more.



Walls are casemated, and moats are deep,  
Strong to defend, and safe to keep.  
Portcullis, and gate, and turret—these  
Are the armour worn by tyrannies.”

Next St. John : “ Yes. We may suppose  
The whole place fashioned for one end—  
The riddance of opposing foes ;  
Or worse, a once familiar friend.  
And yet so often was this plan  
Adopted upon hill and green,  
We think with Essex, ‘ That the Queen  
Might put the body of a man  
To better use than lop its head.  
In his case, too, it might be said,  
Though other sufferers’ blood was spilt  
For less than Robert Devereux’s guilt,  
His bravery, youth, and generous hand,  
And popular credit with the land,

Might have been placed, with some amount  
Of patience, and some slight foreseeing,  
On the State's books to more account,  
Than to be blotted out of being.

The Queen, 'twixt love and hate, recoiled  
From killing him outright—then kill'd ;  
So Nature's handy-work was spoiled  
By one self-doubting, yet self-willed.  
' God's light ' oft graced her lips, 'tis true ;  
Would that her heart had had it too !”

“ Oft lips and hearts have small accord,”  
Said Elliot, “ both in loon and lord.  
Yet History's conscience cannot say  
Elizabeth had no cause to take  
Th' impetuous rebel's life away,  
Who slight excuse thus far could make  
That in past contests he had been  
Hailed victor by his amorous Queen.

So—as she *had* given in—his will,  
With larger aims, might drive her still !  
One step too forward sealed his fate ;  
    For, frightened by the length he ran,  
His monarch was compelled to hate  
    The traitor while she loved the man.  
And knaves of State lived, doubtless, then,  
    As in our duller times they do,  
Who used the hands of other men  
    For tools, but kept their own from view.”

“ Yes,” answered St. John. “ Centuries cast  
Their shadows to obscure the past.  
How hard to solve, how full of fear,  
The riddles History reads us here !  
Here the sixth Henry died—the cause ?  
    Speak, ye who know it! Died of grief,  
    They said. Could he, the ducal chief  
And self-made king, swear, ‘ Thus it was ’ ?

Or did sharp blade or poisoned bowl  
Divorce the body and the soul  
Of one on such a throne to sit  
In soul and body both unfit,  
Although he borrowed, but in vain,  
The help of Margaret's brisker brain?

    A young king dead, and by his side  
His ducal brother!—true, they died.  
But how? Who knows? Did he yclept  
The hunch-back Prince? Who now, except  
By likely guess, can penetrate  
The mystery of their savage fate?"

Then Elliot: " Things have happened here  
Nearer in time, so seen more clear.  
James the last sent—to show how Power  
    Could vary victims at its ease—  
A file of Bishops to the Tower.  
Lo! see them pass to bend their knees

In yonder chapel. Hark! the Seven  
Thank boldly an indulgent Heaven  
For this last suffering, and its cause—  
God's glory and their country's laws.  
At Westminster the Seven were tried ;  
    The Seven, too, were found guiltless there.  
    Then shouts triumphant rent the air,  
And citizen with soldier vied  
In hailing the great victory won  
O'er the false Charles's bigot son :  
This was the storm's presaging tone.  
    Strange, too, how interested ears  
    Heard not the sound so full of fears—  
The earthquake growling 'neath a throne!"

“ Romance, it seems, without done wrong  
Cannot exist in prose or song !”  
Cried St. John. “ And worst men can breed  
Some interest by a daring deed.

This passage might be that whereby  
Lord Mortimer of Wigmore fled.  
Captive for life, he was but dead,  
Yet might revive if he could fly.  
So for the first tempestuous night  
He planned the order of his flight.  
He bid the Constable of the Tower  
To supper. By the midnight hour  
Mirth raged within and wind without ;  
The howling storm, the wassail shout.  
And oft Sir Stephen Segrave quaffed  
The sweets of his narcotic draft,  
And the guards slept—O sound divine!—  
Oppressed by medicated wine.  
' Lord Roger ! long may'st thou live here  
To give thy friends such costly cheer ;  
But my lord drinks not as the rest !'  
His lordship smiled, and plied his guest ;  
And when Sir Stephen snored, with all  
His followings, through the chamber-wall

Lord Mortimer broke, and from on high  
Into the palace kitchen nigh  
Sprang downward.—Ready for ascent  
A ladder-rope, and up he went,  
And down the other side. Behind  
He left the grey Tower-walls to find  
Moored to the bank a shallow boat.  
Quickly he cross'd the river-moat ;  
There, servants, horses—muscles strained,  
Spurs reddened to outride the hunt  
That follows fast—then Hampshire gained,  
A waiting ship, and France in front !”

Then Russell : “ Time hath much to tell  
Since his stream flowed and flowed, before  
Our days, two centuries back and more.  
Let Fancy mount against the flood.

We stand within a noisome cell,  
Bad even here, where none are good ;

Prisons for prisoners. So, by right,  
This holds one. Now survey the sight.

What is his person? Ringlets fall

In flaxen richness from his head;

Comely in face, not over-tall;

With tint where yellow masters red;

The outward bearing and the mind

Steadied by thought, by courts refined;

Blood warm and bounding, and a name

His mistress muse hath raised to fame.

What is his fault? Perhaps he knows

Some things a king might wish unknown.

Alas! for them who can disclose

The wants and weakness of a throne.

Perhaps he'd given advice—the best,

Being so, may cause the most offence,

Unto a noble patron, blest

With handsome face and scanty sense;

And blamed the love he could not cure

For a most filthy paramour.



And so it was no difficult thing  
To misdescribe him to the king,  
Who, pitiful himself, would lean  
Tow'rd thinking other men as mean.

“Behold his punishment, and say  
If Hell hath one more fearful still.  
A man whom torture fails to kill,  
Although it rack him night and day;  
For life unto his entrails clings,  
With poison gnawing at their strings.  
The food that should be strength and health  
Is drugged and dosed by devilish stealth,  
Yet keeps the wretch alive to bear  
The flames that burn and fangs that tear.  
More—give him more; so let him eat  
Corruption in the tainted meat,  
And sink on the stone floor and cry  
For Death to ease him, but not die.

More nourishment, so called,—more yet !

Nay ! never heard the victim's shriek.

Fresh poison ! make it stronger. Let

The vulture have a double beak.

Stop ! not for pity, but no more

Is needed. See him writhe and roll,

Like a crushed insect, on the floor—

This man with an immortal soul !

Not much remains. The sufferer grows

More feeble, and more faint his throes.

A few sharp twitches, as if pain

Had done its worst to rack his brain,

Then all is still, save what the breath

Stirs in its flight. Can this be death ?

The heart—pulse—beat yet. Feel them !—Nay,

There is no fear. Be quick ! Away

To burial with the harmless clay.

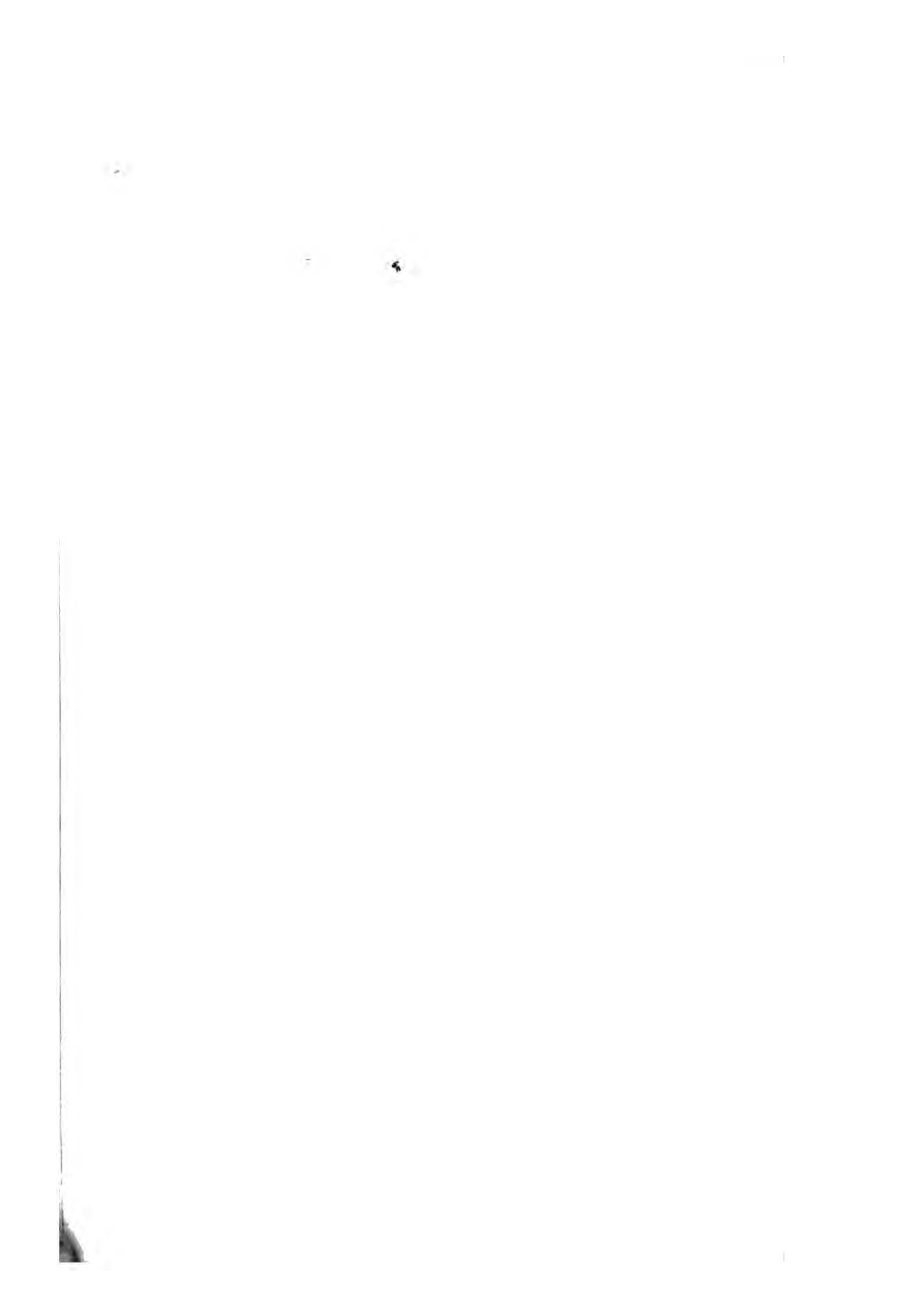
“ O God ! thy vengeance, tho' in part,

Is sometimes seen on earth. The heart

Of Somerset—'twas something this—  
Grew sickened of his dear-bought bliss.  
He saw his loose and lovely wife  
As a fiend linked to him for life,  
While she ungrudgingly returned  
The hate with which her husband burned.  
'Tis something more, that History says  
The beauteous demon's latest days  
Were darkened by disease, which must,  
    (Being of a strange congenial kind),  
    Have forced upon her dying mind  
The memories of her loathsome lust."

Homeward the friends in silence bent  
Their footsteps, musing as they went ;  
And many days past o'er them ere,  
Forewarned, they met again to share  
The welcome Russell gave, and said,  
"Now read thy tale." And thus he read:—

SIR JOHN PERROT.



## SIR JOHN PERROT.



FROM green unsounding lanes ;  
From quiet gardens robed by Spring  
In prodigal colours ; from sheep-tufted plains  
And windy hillocks ; from black fields, where sing  
Uncultured ploughmen, as they toil  
To channel seed-graves in the soil ;  
From watching birds upon the flick'ring wing,  
And scenting smells, and seeing sights,  
And all that rural scenes dispense  
To fill each sharp yet lazy sense  
With that in which it most delights,

O! haste away, and stand within

The monster town, whose tawny air  
Is laden with the ceaseless din

Of life, in search of living there—

Of human insects, that unfold

Their wings in constant flight for gold.

There, in that kingdom formed of streets

Take up thy stand, and all that meets

Thy outward sense heed not nor hear,

But turn thy gaze, and bend thine ear

With all the mind supplies of power

To penetrate that massive tower.

Draw up the curtain dropt between

The acted past and living scene,

That grandest of all plays to view—

Alas! too sombre in its hue—

Performed by crowds in ancient days

For crowds unborn to hiss or praise.

Another victim ! . Wherefore start ?

Among so many what is one ?

When Power can get its work well done

To cage the limbs, or break the heart,

'Twere folly not, though Saints may preach,

To do the wrong within its reach.

*This* prisoner is a man, large-souled,

Large-bodied, whom the narrow hold

Of this dark dungeon-cell hath bowed

To nearer level with the crowd.

A giant, who, when he had tasted

For the first time of prison fare,

Was worried by the shame and wasted

To the weak thing now sitting there.

His soul, instinct with choleric fire,

Was rash, though noble in its ire,

And when it saw things evil, rushed

To clear the earth of what was base,

While in the ruin that took place

Some mingled good was sometimes crushed ;



Himself a ruin, which his foes  
Might ev'n admire, like one of those  
Which early Greece hath left to raise  
The love and hate of modern days,  
The love that sees, with fond regret,  
So much of beauty living yet ;  
The hate that cannot calmly view  
The deeds itself must fail to do.

But still there is, in man's decay,  
One part, when others drop away,  
Which to the wreck the strongest clings ;  
    Thus yet survives within his eye  
    Enough of grandeur to supply  
The faces of a dozen kings.  
'Tis said by them too, who aspire  
    To know at Court what may be known,  
His father was a king, the Sire  
    Of her who fills the throne.

But now we pity as we glance  
At him, the mighty hunter, who,  
In days fast-fading from his view  
Within the present night, was sung  
As follows in a foreign tongue,  
For the great deeds he did in France.

---

When the hills brightened o'er with the first look of day,  
The grim beast of chase in his mountain-frank lay,  
And Perrot's sword-blade flash'd unstain'd to the light,  
That was dull'd o'er with blood ere the fall of the night.

Fear never till then chilled the heart of the boar,  
For he ne'er had met *him* the destroyer before,  
Who came forth to meet him with falchion and steed,  
And a hand for the blow, and a soul for the deed.

He fled, as the hurricane swoops in its flight ;  
He charged, as the storm rushes forth in its might ;  
Yet his strength was but weak, and his speed was but  
slow,  
To cope with, or fly from, the arm of his foe.

From the back of his steed down jump'd Perrot the  
bold,  
While, awe-struck, each huntsman stood still to behold;  
And the Queen shrieked to witness the fate of the brave,  
While our king he stepp'd forward to succour and save.

But little cared Perrot if succour were near,  
As his arm knew no weakness, his breast knew no fear;  
Then the brute ground his tusches to rush on his prey,  
And the man stood erect to be slain or to slay.

Up that hand rose, and down like a thunder-bolt fell,  
And the Englishman's sword did its work of death well;  
For with neck severed through, as a knife cuts a string,  
The boar rolled in blood at the feet of the King.

---

And such a man as this to dwell,  
Cribbed in a solitary cell!  
The soul that should be gathering fame  
In slaying men, or slaughtering game,

In might all living men beyond,  
    Fashioned by Nature's wisdom, free  
    As the illimitable sea,  
To stagnate like a country pond!  
Why here? *That* let his foes declare—  
How, seated in viceregal chair,  
His mind was one that could not brook,  
    When force could crush, to kill by guile  
The discontent that walked the land;  
And so he laid a heavy hand  
Upon the rebel crew that shook  
    The quiet of a sister isle.

Why here? Two kings were once his friends,  
    And a queen loves him still, 'tis said;  
With love of royal hearts there blends  
    Some danger to the object's head;  
And when the last was crowned, he bore  
    The canopy with other three.  
Proud then in the world's sight to be  
Exalted, but to sink the more.

The Queen, because this man subdued  
Her Irish foes, and broke the power  
Of the sea-robbers, made the Tower  
The measure of her gratitude.

Strange, when a country, served too well,  
Repays the service with a cell!

Then hear his tale : the facts are true,  
And claim attention, though not new ;  
For Nature does not change the seeds  
That bear the crop of human deeds.

'Tis a hard thing to govern well.  
To govern Ireland—let them tell  
How hard *that* task is who have tried.  
'Tis a hate-breeding thing beside  
To make the law of right our own,  
And ask advice from Heaven alone.  
And as Sir John's vice-regal rule  
Was strict to harshness, every fool

And every villain swelled the cry  
That linked his name with tyranny.  
Lo ! an Archbishop, he the head  
Of the pure faith whose law is love,  
    Did hate him with the godless zeal  
    Which churchmen by profession feel.  
A Chancellor, one who sat above  
    Th' unlearned mob, in legal state,  
    Did hate him with a lawless hate ;  
And, as if more were wanting still  
To heap the measure of his ill,  
A priest, whose life, due long ago  
    To justice, beyond hope was spared,  
(Because his mercy willed it so) ;  
    Risen from the grave as 'twere, yet dared  
To curse the man to whom was due  
The life yet left him thus to do.

But still his foes could not prevail  
    By means in which such warriors trust—

The open charge, the whispered tale—

To sink their victim in the dust.

For the Queen liked him, 'twas believed ;

She liked him, as her nature could,

Imperious, obstinate, and shrewd ;

Which did most cruel things, then grieved,

With half regret, and feigned surprise :

A nature with a vision strong

To see the good before its eyes,

And yet too weak to love it long.

And Perrot knew her faults, and true

To impulse, spake the things he knew ;

But when, as then, he stood erect

Before her, something like respect

And loving reverence rose between

The king-like subject and the Queen.

His haters thus no help could find

In natural things to suit their mind ;

So next the supernatural hailed  
As fitting guide where Reason failed.

And thus it was. Sir John was bound,  
Upon a cruise, to catch and beat—  
This he resolved—the Spanish fleet.  
As his barge pass'd the Queen's, she found  
Good reason in his handsome face  
To send for him. Her royal grace  
Around his neck a jewel hung  
On massy gold chain fitly strung,  
And cried, "Wear this for me: beware  
Thou lose it not, nor cease to wear.  
Do this, and no calamity  
Shall ever light on thine or thee."  
'Twas clear this talisman supplied  
The place of angels by his side.  
What could they do when such a charm  
Preserved the hated man from harm?



And they must get this charm—but how ?  
By means which skill may prompt, or chance allow.  
But chiefly did they build on that old plan  
Which man has made available 'gainst man,  
Since, when the world was young, he first could find  
Excuse for sinning, framed by woman's art,  
And pointed by her charms, and passion-blind,  
Lost Eden then, and evermore his heart.

If Perrot loved Blanche Parry, he  
Could plead at least the excuse which all  
Have had since Adam's wilful fall—  
The stale excuse, yet ever new,  
And good enough for action—she  
Was beautiful, and loved him too.  
So Wyriott sought her with a tale  
Conceived to gain her kindly ear.  
“ She knew Sir John ; the time was near  
When he—would she, too, go ?—would sail

To re-assume the reins of power.  
Ah! if in some propitious hour,  
She could but think of what he wanted,  
And then, that one small favour granted,  
Unto the border of the grave  
He would remain her useful slave."

And after further speech had past,  
Blanche smiled, and promised him at last,  
To work on Perrot's love, and thought  
Thence to extract the boon he sought ;  
He thanked her, bowed, then raised his head ;  
Looked at her, looked aside, and said,  
" Success is sure. Could I ask more  
Or better proof than that before  
My eyes, which see thou as thou art,  
That not a despot of the day  
Could reign with more imperial sway  
Than thou in the vice-regal heart ?

Happy *his* heart whose utmost need

So much of love and beauty bless.

His taste is great ; 'twere sad indeed

To think his constancy was less."

"What dost thou mean?" the lady cried.

"Surely I praised his taste," replied

Wyriott, with downcast eyes. "'Twere waste

Of time and truth to praise the taste

Of one who could—how could he?—stray

As some—not I among them—say,

To search abroad with gluttonous eyes

For treasures which his home supplies."

"Speak out!" she answered him, "Right well

I see that thou hast more to tell."

Then he: "How say, how hint a blame

Of one so justly praised by fame?

Of one so good—one, too, whom soon

I hope to thank for granted boon!"

"Favours," she answered, "soon or late,

When discontinued, lead to hate,

For Gratitude will turn and stand  
To curse the thing it should have bless'd.  
Love only kneels to kiss the hand  
By which 'tis smitten or caress'd.  
Now tell me—thou would'st call Sir John  
Unfaithful to one flame? Say on!"

Then Wyriott: "If I held for true  
What others hold, this should I do."  
"And thou," she cried, "believ'st, forsooth,  
That the world's creed is always truth!"  
"'Twere hard," he answered, "to deny  
All credence to a popular cry."  
"Should I," she asked, "be jealous then  
Of this most popular of men?"  
"Nay—'twould prove clearly," he replied,  
"How great thy constancy must be  
To love one only man, when he  
Owns half a hundred hearts beside."

“Then have thy proof,” she cried, “the thing  
*Is* clear. Ev’n did a hundred share  
My lover’s love, I still would cling  
    To what I have. I could not bear  
    To lose my little portion there.  
*I* do not deem it strange, who know  
What that man is, that love should flow  
Tow’rds him, as streams to ocean run,  
The many to be lost in one.”

“With such good feeling,” he exclaimed,  
“Thou might’st bear with me, if I named  
A lady who affects the throne  
Which Heav’n made thee to share alone.”  
“That is,” she answered, “thou would’st try  
A woman’s curiosity,  
When jealous hints are breath’d in vain.  
But what in this hast thou to gain?”  
Then Wyriott: “To please thee—my end  
In doing this to gain a friend.”

✦

“Would it *quite* please me?” she replied.

“No matter! now thy tale unfold.

Fear not, my breast shall ever hide

The secret struggling to be told.

I cannot cease to love. This may

Be folly, but 'twill have its way.”

He answered, “I will name no name,

What thine eyes see thy tongue shall blame.

Listen. He has, as well thou know'st,

A jewel fair; his constant boast

Is, the Queen gave it him.” “He speaks

What all men know for truth,” she said.

Though o'er the pallor of her cheeks

There mantled a disturbing red.

“How can all know,” he cried, “what none

Was by to see, or saw it done?”

“But his own word?” said Blanche. Awhile

He paused, then answered with a smile,

“The truth, if told thee, to my mind  
Were cruel, and Sir John is kind.  
He could not give thee pain—now hear,  
Dear lady!—dare I call thee dear?”  
And on he went, unheeding now  
The frown that slightly roughed her brow.  
“If thou can’st manage so that I  
May meet thee, and, Sir John not by,  
May see that jewel, I will bring  
The man who made, and knows a spring  
Which, touched by skilful hands, will show  
A portrait, and a name below.”  
“Which does not for original claim  
A monarch?”—cried she. “Nor the name  
Elizabeth!”—he added. So  
He worked on her, then turned to go,  
And with a look which made it seem  
That love was chastened by esteem.

What cannot woman conquer, who has made  
Her mind up for success? Her eye disarms  
Objections first; and face and form arrayed  
For fight, are argumentative with charms,  
While the lips, pouting markedly, display  
The price, unspeaking, they are there to pay.

'Tis night, when they, they only are awake  
Who watch for vice, or work for virtue's sake.  
'Tis night, when stillness in great cities reigns,  
To favour pilfering hands and studious brains;  
Night, when health sleeps, and sickness turns to find,  
And turns in vain, a posture to its mind;  
Night fraught with dreams, which in themselves may tell  
Whether they flow from Heaven, or rise from Hell.  
With what a fulness is it charged!—More strange  
Than light's real scenes in compass and in change.  
Incongruous vision, and imperfect scheme,  
Abortive movement, and unfruitful dream;



Mix up the whole of what a town of men  
Is doing, thinking, fancying, feeling then,  
And if it could at once be seen, 'twould be  
The maddest motley of humanity !

That night, Sir John, worn out by toil,  
    Chanced in Blanche Parry's house to be ;  
No strong-armed tiller of the soil  
    Slumbered more peacefully than he.  
'Twas said too he had drunken deep  
Of cups provocative of sleep.  
Came Wyrriott then, and with him came  
A man—he did not need a name—  
For a court-jeweller his mien  
    Was awkward, and at times 'twas rude,  
Yet whensoe'er it *could* be seen  
    His eye looked dangerously shrewd,  
And where thoughts best unspoken lurk.  
Less fit he seemed for speech than work :

A man of business he, who reckoned  
The first a hind'rance to the second.  
But Wyriott kindly made th' amend,  
And talked for both himself and friend ;  
And when the casket which, where'er  
Sir John went, travelled with him there,  
Was brought below, and she had placed  
    The treasure in those skilful hands,  
    He steps near, speaking still, and stands  
Between her and the light, in haste  
As from a sudden thought, and cries,  
“ List, dearest lady, and be wise  
In time—time flies—but 'tis not yet  
    Too late to stop this search, if thou  
    Wilt say the word, and say it now,  
And spare thy future from regret.”

Then she : “ 'Tis folly to excite  
    My wish to see, and then to say  
Be blind ! now let me have a sight  
    Of this great beauty ! ”   “ Madam, nay !

I said not beauty !” he replied.

“ There I must be the judge,” she cried :

And going tow’rd the man, he held

The casket out—on silken bed

The jewel resting there—and said,

Looking askance, “ I am compelled

To own myself mistaken here.

I cannot find the spring. ’Tis clear

’Tis not the ornament I made,

Yet were the two together laid,

But for the missing spring, I durst

Have sworn the second was the first.”

“ No doubt they’re *very* like—but own,”

Cried Wyrriott, in a sneering tone,

“ The fool that thou hast been to make

So inconvenient a mistake,

To waste this lady’s time, and cast

Suspicion on myself beside.”

Then Blanche exclaimed, “ The minutes past

I would to years have multiplied

To prove that he, in whom I live,  
Deserves the heart I'm forced to give."

And so they parted, each from each  
With smile and bow, and civil speech.  
And all seemed pleased with all (whate'er  
The reason) that had happened there.

But when Sir John to Erin's land  
Returning re-assumed command,  
And dealt th' impartial blows of law,  
There followed what his foes foresaw ;  
His rigid rule, thus far unwise,  
Raised up such countless enemies,  
His virtues failed to make amends,  
And right the scale by winning friends,  
And add, too, that in his estate

The serpent's cleverer than the dove :  
So, with too rare exceptions, hate  
Is wiser and less weak than love.

Then, in some ill-conditioned hour,  
They worked upon the Queen to write,  
And, in her own tyrannic might,  
Abuse him for abuse of power.  
Well knew they when that missive came  
Into his hands, the passionate man  
Would find in every line that ran  
A match to set his soul on flame.  
“God’s name! on what a slippery height,”  
He shouted, “stands a favourite!  
Confound those natures that caress  
To hit the harder when the whim  
May strike them. Would she liked me less,  
And left me free to sink or swim,  
I’d stem this sea, and all its stir,  
If not weighed down by help from her!  
Heaven knows which are the worst to bear—  
Intrigues of heart or politics.  
The former form the greater snare  
With passions that are hard to fix.

Thank God! that by the kindred blood

That fills my veins I'm placed above

*One* risk at least, else had I stood

In peril of her spurious love.

But what?—Should once the royal mind

See the man only, and be blind

To the half-brotherhood that lies

Between her and her fantasies!"

Coarse words! Without one phrase toned down,

Reported to the royal ear;

And they who saw that ominous frown

Knew, and were glad, the storm was near.

The utt'rings of an honest heart,

Though erring in its wrath, were all

That all his foes, with all their art,

Could bring in proof to work his fall.

Soon said, soon told those words, and yet

They sent the strong man to his doom,

Where soul and body waste and fret,

Longing to move, but wanting room.

Behold him, lessening hour by hour,  
Cramped in that ignominious tower.  
And Blanche, too, comes to meet him there.  
Say, was it pity that allowed

That visit, or the wish that she  
Might view the stern man bent and bowed,  
And, being part of him, might share  
His degradation?—both would be  
Shocked to be so seen, so to see.

The shuddering of a hopeless grief  
Preludes some broken words, and then  
Tears force their bounds, and rain relief;  
And she exclaims, “Most wronged of men!  
Yet 'tis thine own fault if too long  
Thou dost endure a needless wrong.  
That talisman—for so men *will*  
Call the Queen's gift—thou hast it still.  
Send it her—claim her bond with thee.  
Demand thy freedom, and be free!”

Then he : “ Dear Blanche ! ’twill grieve thee sore—  
That talisman ! ’tis mine no more ;  
Lost—stolen ! and one in outward face,  
Made like it, nestling in its place ! ”

Shrieking, upon her knees she falls,  
And cries to him in piteous tone,  
“ Light breaks upon me, horrid light ;  
Mine is the fault, and mine alone.

I have offended in thy sight  
And Heaven’s !—Heav’n help me to atone !  
I will—I’ll go.” And when at last,

As reason re-assured her brain,  
And cleared her choking voice again,  
She told of Wyrriott and the past,  
And his two visits, and his plan  
To bring that clever-fingered man ;  
And added, “ I will seek the Queen,  
And tell her all, and step between



Her wrath and thee. I'll get it back."  
Then fevered by a fresh attack  
Of passion, she throws up her hands,  
And cries "No, no. This wrong demands  
My life. Ten lives were all too small  
For justice. Take it! I would fall  
By thee--thou'rt strong, thou'rt just. I wait  
My sentence, and embrace my fate."

He lifts his hand up to disguise  
The grief that glistens in his eyes;  
And in a voice once firm and high,  
Now jarred and shrunk by tyranny,  
Says calmly, "May thy life, Blanche, be  
As safe from all men as from me!  
Whate'er the worth that pardon hath  
From a degraded man, 'tis thine.  
There is no place for pride or wrath  
In such a crippled heart as mine.

All that the strong man was of old  
Is broken in this gloomy hold!"

Then she : " My sole love! I will go,  
Regain this jewel first, then throw  
Myself at the Queen's feet, and trust  
To rise not ere I make her just.  
Those who best know her humours say  
She will not take thy life away."

" Ah!" he exclaims; " with good name gone  
The life hath perished, for the man  
Is not a soulless brute that can  
Be cursed and beaten, yet live on,  
And eat the food its lord bestows  
To give it strength to bear more blows.  
And if you ask of my disgrace  
' What is't ? ' I answer, See this place!  
When he who hath done work and well  
Is, like a felon or a fool,  
Made safe, or punished in a cell—

That worst of slaves where menials rule—  
Too silly or too criminal  
To mix with men beyond its wall,  
With fruit and leaves both gone ; what, Blanche,  
Saith God ?—‘ Cut off and burn the branch !’  
Yet might’st thou, love, when I am dead  
Do kindness to my injured name,  
That when the now hard times have fled  
The future may find less to blame,  
And cry, ‘ Perhaps this man was not  
So bad to merit all he got !’ ”

Then Blanche weeps sore, and vows to make  
Her life one duty for his sake,  
To gain the jewel lost, and right  
His fallen fame in England’s sight.  
More tears, more vows, and heart to heart  
Prest fondly, and the lovers part.

Days pass, and swell to weeks ; and yet  
Blanche comes not— Ah ! can *she* forget

The dearest and most faithful? Nay!

He will wait calmly—one more day.

*It comes, not she. Lone man! No more shalt thou*

*Imprint thy kisses on her living brow;*

No more shalt thou behold her face

Until the archangelic trumpet sound

The judgment-day of Adam's race,

And Evil be cast down, and Faith raised up and  
crowned.

She hath but gone before thee in the death

Which shall be thine ere long;

The gentle and the strong—

One slain by slow degrees, one slaughtered in a breath.

She had sought Wyrriott—found him—poured

A storm of anger on his head

In his own house. If not restored—

That jewel—she would fly and spread

The case before the Queen, and then—

He bowed, that wiliest of men,

Confessed his fault, and said, "No need  
To publish—yet how bad that deed !  
Follow me, and thy hands shall hold  
That jewel soon, and I be bold  
To ask for pardon." Then they went  
By turns in mounting and descent,  
And winding ways, until their tramp  
    Sounded more hollow on the stone.  
They reach a room ; 'tis dark and damp  
And silent, fit for deeds of ill  
    To be done there, and not be known.  
She shudders, and, too late, stands still,  
Calling on Wyrriott—no reply.  
She strains her vision—none seem nigh.  
And then a push, a shriek, a heavy fall,  
The plash of water, and an echoing wall,  
And at the bottom of a deep well lies,  
A mass too crushed for lingering agonies,  
What once was Blanche. 'Twould sicken love to view  
That erst fair form and face from which her errors grew.

True heart to a false love—false! Yet may all  
Who seek not to be judged, forbear to cast  
The first stone at another, lest at last  
The weight of their own sins o'erwhelm them in its fall.

Wait on, Sir John!—not long. The shortening  
breath,  
And shrinking form; these are the seals of Death.  
Soon will he come to claim thee, soonest best;  
Thy hope is dead—with it then die the rest!  
Heaven may be kind to him whom right divine opprest.

Weeks past, and at the wonted hour  
There came the jailor to his cell,  
And asked if all was well,  
That is, if yet he lived to feel the weight of power.  
Yes, all is well, as far as life was ill  
For him who lies stretched out and still,  
The food untasted by his side,  
The meagre fare which law supplied—  
O waste it not! 'Twill feed life's flickering spark  
Within some other wretch, till all grows dark.

Peace to that noble spirit! Is it peace  
Upon the throne? Is there no bitterness  
In having one good servant less?

*Her* loss is his release.

Release from earth to him is giv'n,  
And unto her, perchance, a lessened hope of Heav'n!

**THIRD VISIT.**





## THIRD VISIT.



FOR the third time—it was the last—

The three friends found themselves within  
This famous Tower. Then Elliot cast

A glance around, and, “They who win  
The game,” he cried, “must count the cost—  
The more won, maybe, the more lost.

Where are they now who planned the strength

Of these stone-walls; scooped prison-cribs  
From out the thickness of their ribs,  
With chains and chill and gloom, not meet  
For brutes, and burrowed in their length  
Thin passages for secret feet?

A doleful town, with all things near  
For dwellers there, as aids to grief.  
And that religion lack not here,  
Their holy heads three chapels rear  
To God, where Satan's self was chief.  
What writings upon dungeon-walls!  
And coats-of-arms, more fitly matched  
With palace-gates and castle-halls;  
And humble names, and verses, scratched  
With a nail's point,—poor efforts these  
Of the cramped mind to stretch for ease!"

And as again the three men stood  
In Peter's chapel, Russell said:  
" 'Twould suit the fancy of my mood  
To sleep one night here with the dead.  
I dare think I should conscious be  
Of motions which I could not see,  
And sounds, like words, within my ear,  
To make their clouded lives more clear,

Whose only rest for heart and head  
Was found beneath the stones we tread."

Then St. John : " Surely in the night  
When ghostly visions rise by right,  
Poor Perrot's spirit came to tell  
The tale which thou hast told so well.  
Would thou could'st so sleep here, to know  
If he, whose heart was cracked by woe,  
Suspected traitor in his day—  
What days those often were !—would lay  
That heart, and all its feelings bare,  
Gerald Fitzgerald of Kildare !  
After his own vext spirit left

Its battered house, say, could it feel  
The mortal terrors that bereft

His kin of life ? Could it reveal,  
If those past suffering contemplate  
The living victim's kindred fate ?  
Three brothers and a son, all killed  
On the same plea ! The headsman spilled

Their blood, to warn the crowds who saw

The itch of treason cured by law.

Can joy and pain torment or please

A soul from earthly bondage free?

Can spirits gaze on sights like these?

Can spirits weep for what they see?"

Then Elliot cried: "How gladly I

Would pass a year within the cell

Of my great namesake, if thereby

I could with him more closely dwell.

'Twould be like leaving earth below

For where pure suns eternal shine,

To enter on that mind, and know

The spirit of so great a shrine.

Suffered by Charles—('tis a strange thing

In our weak eyes to look on power,

Heav'n-granted, e'en for one short hour,

O'er such a man to such a king!)—

Suffered to languish in a den,  
Like a wild beast, and there to die,  
Because he would not damn his pen  
To a historic infamy,  
And write recanting words, and cry  
For pardon—he, whose heart and mind  
Were strength and sense and truth combined—  
To him who was a living lie!  
And when his children stooped to pray  
That they might take their dead away,  
And give it fitting burial where  
His sires lay buried, then replied  
The King, right royally, ‘He died  
In prison. Let his grave be there!’

“ And yet, a great man never dies.

His voice is heard from age to age ;  
And Elliot’s tomb, in pilgrims’ eyes,  
Is like a marble-graven page,

Recording what great things are done  
For Freedom, ere the fight be won!"

How often, too, must Charles's eyes—

When conscience kept the King awake—  
Have seen the ghost of Strafford rise,

With painful look, and lips that spake  
In words heard only by the heart,

'False Prince, and falser friend thou art!'

Thank God that in whate'er we may

Fall short of England's children then,  
We cannot have such kings as they  
To rule o'er us degenerate men.

Then Russell: "Ever to my view

It seems most strange that those in power  
Oft live so merely for the hour—

Its instant good, or false or true.

E'en granting that their thoughts ne'er reach  
Beyond the grave that's dug for each,  
They scarcely seem to cast one glance  
    To the long earthly life that lies  
    In waiting for their memories ;  
Nor build upon the likely chance,  
That no good man will be the friend  
Of their past selves, nor e'en the bad defend."

"A problem hard for human brains  
    To solve," cried St. John. "Harder far  
Than weighing out the earth in grains,  
    Or measuring space from star to star,  
When a man, nervous overmuch  
To faintest breath, or slightest touch,  
That wounds his pride, or lowers his fame,  
Or breaks his ease, can trust his name  
To worlds unborn, nor cares to guess  
If Time shall blacken it or bless."



Then Russell : “ Samples may be had  
Of men, like goods, completely bad,  
Who doubtless merited the doom  
That here consigned them to their tomb  
Before the time ; or dragged them hence  
To purge by death some black offence.  
But the most had—so caged and slain—  
Some grace of heart, or gift of brain,  
That vexed the mind or curbed the hand  
Of those who then misruled the land ;  
That cared not for a despot’s frown,  
Or sought to purify a crown,  
And drew its earthly lightnings down.

“ We may admire More’s bold content  
To meet the fate his victims met.  
Bigot in creed and action, yet  
He had most excellent element  
In his compounded nature. Placed  
In notable sight of all, he graced

The senate and the bar ; sedate  
And shrewd in council or debate,  
And used for best, to smite or save,  
Th' imperfect light his conscience gave.  
Sentenced, and to the Tower again  
    Conveyed, twice did his daughter spring  
To clasp him in her arms, and rain  
    Her grief on his dear face, and cling,  
Till torn off, to his aged frame,  
How many kings have known the same,  
Or felt, in that supremest hour  
That mostly stains the pride of power,  
When their death-rooms drew many a guest,  
That Love was present 'mid the rest ?”

Quoth Elliot : “ Pause awhile before  
The Bell-tower. By its gloomy door  
See white-haired Fisher enter in,  
To suffer for the monstrous sin

Of thinking there are certain things  
Unlawful for the best of kings,  
E'en though as great and good as he  
Of six-times married memory !  
The Bishop's food, he wrote, was less  
Than strength required ; and then his dress  
Hung, rag-like, on his feeble form,  
Which age and winter wanted warm ;  
And yet he lived untended through  
All wrong his enemies could do.  
'Twas hard to waste their cruelty  
On an old man who would not die.  
They could not wait for time to kill,  
And so they slew him on the Hill.

“ On London's populous bridge, 'twas said,  
On a pole's point they fixed his head.  
The wrinkled face filled out and grew  
Each day more life-like in its hue ;

And for two weeks the talking town  
Gazed at it till 'twas taken down."

"Enough of bloody green and hill,"

Cried St. John. "Sickening visions these!

And captives starved and strick'n, until

The life leaks outward by degrees—

Scaffolds that rise, and blows that fall,

Lopt trunk, and secret funeral.

I seem to breathe a thick dun air,

With a grim Death's-head grinning through,

As if the more he ate he grew

In favour with his feeders there.

Away, my friends! and not again

To tread this slaughter-house for men.

For a short time I fly to hide

In some far hamlet's quiet nook,

Where naught is seen or heard beside

Green field and flower and babbling brook,

Contending with the pebbles, strewed  
In vain attempt to bar the road.  
And when our meeting next takes place,  
We will, without the leave or grace  
Of despot asked or giv'n, discuss  
    The thoughts and feelings wakened here,  
    And talk of wrongs without a fear  
That the like fate will light on us,  
And feed the mind, and fill the hour,  
With other visions of the Tower."

ARABELLA STUART.



## ARABELLA STUART.



**E**RECT a room, stone-cold and bare,  
With sickness in the drooping air,  
And set a weeping prisoner there ;  
A room built up with cruel art,  
    Within whose gloomy hold there falls  
    No sunshine on the barren walls,  
No hope upon the heart.  
Shut out the blueness and the green  
Of sky and earth. Not here be seen,  
Not here be heard, or sound or sight  
To soothe with melody and light ;  
To give the stagnant mind employ,



And ease the weariness of woe  
In its debased estate, although  
They may not raise to joy.  
A friendly voice, the comforting touch  
Of friendly hands, these were too much,—  
Exclude them; enter and behold,  
And Fancy sees what History saw of old.

And who the prisoner? One, may be,  
Who stands upon so low a round  
Of life, that they of higher place,  
As custom words it, by Heaven's grace,  
Who top the ladder, cannot see  
The wrongs of aught so near the ground?  
Nay, in that prisoner's veins there rolls  
The blood which kings, though small of name  
Or cursed by all their subjects, claim  
O'er less ethereal souls.

Then, is it one of that rough sex, endowed  
    With harder hand and sterner breast  
For struggling with the struggling crowd,  
    And which, inflicting most, should suffer best ?  
Ah ! 'tis a woman from whose face  
    The long extravagance of wrong  
Hath not yet worn away each trace  
Of gentle beauty and of grace  
    That unto youth of right belong.  
Yes, young, if this be taken for truth,  
That years when counted make up youth.  
    Her mind, which God created rich,  
    And gifted with a loftier tone,  
*His* creatures' cruelty, made wise  
By all the arts which hate supplies,  
    Degraded from its envious niche,  
    And left it poorer than their own.

Then say at least 'tis justly done,  
That here, imprisoned and forlorn,

She reaps the fruit of some outcryng crime—

Harsh fruit unmellowed by the sun.

Nay, 'tis the crime of being born ;

'Tis Nature's fault that she can show

Two birth-lines from dead kings, and so

A living monarch shakes to see

The rival that may cast him down,

And crushes in captivity

All claims to a dishonoured crown ;

And dimly wise, forecasts the hour

When armed revolt shall waste the land,

And battle, never-welcome, lower,

And feels the awful reins of Power

Shake in his nerveless hand ;

'Tis thus this man upon a throne can find

No fresher plan than play a tyrant's part,

For cowardice that blinds the mind

Will brutalize the heart.

One maid alone on her to wait,  
Whom princes, stooping from their state,  
Would serve on bended knee, and take  
No payment, for the pleasure's sake.  
Hear one sweet word, one smile behold,  
To them were more than if they sold  
Their service for a kingdom's gold.  
Smiles now unto that face are strange,  
Where thought on thought treads, pressing on  
    In melancholy range.  
But now and then the eye that shone  
    Of old so mildly, glares with light,  
    As bursts a meteor on the night  
In one short angry flash, then dies  
Into the quiet of the skies.

And after some preluding chords  
    ('Tis her own melody and words),

Her song rings out upon the gloom.

How sadly is it echoed there,

And strangely, on the sullen air

Of that cold music-room !

---

Waiting till the clouds be scatter'd, and the sun have  
leave to shine ;

Waiting till the grapes, sour-clust'ring, ripen into  
ruby wine ;

Waiting till the harvest yellow in the lowly-bending  
grain,

Or the face of Nature brighten after weeping tears in  
rain.

Waiting until health returning paint the cheek and  
fill the frame ;

Waiting until new-born feeling kindle a neglected  
flame ;

Waiting for the dawn of daylight, for the opening of  
the flower ;

Waiting till the well-known footstep sound on the  
appointed hour.

Ah! such waitings are not grievous if the spirit speaks  
within

That the shadows shall be broken, that the die we cast  
shall win ;

That the winter, dark and heavy, shall be shaken from  
the year,

And the birds reseek the branches, and the sky once  
more be clear.

If we have a certain vision that the better time shall  
come,

When the look we love shall see us, and the voice no  
more be dumb ;

And the watching be requited, and the prayer obtain  
its suit,

And the seed which Nature planted shall be fostered  
into fruit.

But how weary is the waiting when, like blinded men,  
we grope,

Stumbling o'er the wrecks of Pleasure in a path unlit  
by Hope ;

Risking ever, never winning—doomed to lose and not  
to find—

'Tis a wrenching of the heart-strings, and a palsy of  
the mind.

Waiting for the tread that sounds not till the very  
sense grows weak,  
Knowing that the search is hopeless—yet we cannot  
cease to seek ;  
Yearning for forgetful quiet, yet ordained to watch  
and wait,  
Like a spirit thrust from Eden at a never-opening gate.  
Waiting! O, 'tis weary waiting, crouching in the shades  
of life ;  
When the eye is shut from seeing, and the hand is tied  
from strife ;  
When no change comes fraught with colour, where  
excitement hath no part ;  
O, this weary, weary waiting is the file that bites the  
heart !

---

She stops, with only the maid's sobs to stir  
The silence—'twas not so in earlier youth ;  
Then palace-halls were redolent for her  
With incense of a flattery that was truth.  
Silent her face too : nothing now can wake  
The spirit of those looks where erst expression spake.

Her soul seems absent, walking o'er  
The past dark paths of life once more.  
She thinks of how in earlier days  
Husbands and crowns before her gaze  
Were pass'd in an unmeaning show,  
Like flies be-winged with fire that glow  
    Upon the night of eastern lands,  
Which children chase to make their prize,  
And which delight the greedy eyes  
    Yet do not reach the hands.

But Arabella never sighed  
For thrones which man and fate denied—  
Not these she sought ; but was it meet,  
    Because a monarch feared—indeed  
    His fears were just—that she might breed  
An offspring worthier of his seat,—  
    A son unborn, that all the joys  
Which Nature urges and man tries  
    To hallow by perpetual ties,



And vowed obedience, should be showered  
On unshod girls and rustic boys,  
And barr'd to one so richly dowered ?  
That ne'er should come within her reach  
That interchange of household speech  
Which binds two beings each to each ;  
The language read by love, that lies  
In blush and smile on brow and cheek ;  
The wish that's gathered from the eyes  
Before the lips can speak ?

Forbid, kind Heav'n ! that this should be ;  
And so, convoyed by love, she found  
A youth who stood on vantage-ground  
Of king-descended ancestry.  
And more than that, whose form and face,  
In their own excellence, would grace  
A line of monarchs or of clowns ;  
For men who are the heirs of crowns,

In natural beauty o'er the rest  
Are not prerogatively blest.

And stealing forth she 'scaped the watch  
Placed on herself by royal fears,  
And broke the harder bondage set  
Upon the natural thoughts of years ;  
And met him — 'twas not far to go—  
When he and she alone—but no—  
O, not alone, if two who loved could make  
Worlds of each other, for the loving's sake ;  
Yet not alone, if heavenly spirits bent  
Their flight from other worlds to give in this  
Unspoken blessing to the rites  
Fashioned to raise two mortals to a bliss  
Nearest their own in their high element,  
The two by symbol and by word  
In indissolvable accord

Were joined, and she forgot her fears,  
And chid her sighs and checked her tears,  
Forgetting all, and all forgiving,  
The griefs and wrongs of her past living,  
As formed for more expansive life  
The maiden grew into the wife.

So both—and who can say which most?—  
Lived in a maze of rapture lost,  
Lived for a season—'twas no more.  
“Too bright to last!”—sad words, before  
How often said, how often felt,  
Of suns that shine and hearts that melt  
With light and longing, till they rest  
Beneath the ever-nearing West.  
They two spoke not the words, yet fear  
Foreknew the shadows deepening near.  
Then why thus madly rush to meet  
The danger yawning at their feet?

Why sink into the soft estate  
Of joy so brief, defying fate ?  
Go, ask the lightning why, mid crashes  
    Of thunder following as it flies,  
It for one measureless moment flashes,  
    Then sinks extinguished in the skies.  
The flash is glorious, though it prove  
    Precursor of a deeper night ;  
So mortals gauge the worth of love  
    By its intensity of light.

Soon well-paid ears were listening,  
    And eyes had seen what they had done ;  
And which, when uttered, caused a king  
    To tremble on an ungraced throne.

O Power ! O strangeness of command !  
When one, the ruler of a land,  
Born for authority more than love,  
To change or crush, but not improve ;

With tawdry mind, and timid breast,  
More weak and wanting than the rest—  
Than half at least of those he rules,  
Not risen to fiends, or sunk to fools ;  
Can cry out “Hear, and go and do !”

And thousands hear, and bow, and long  
To be the foremost of the crew,  
And work the delegated wrong.

The wrong was this :—The pair were seized  
By royal myrmidons, who forced  
Seymour, from light and love divorced,  
To the Tower’s river-cinctured hold,  
To be released when Hatred pleased,  
And Cowardice grew bold.

And Arabella was close pent  
Beneath a private roof, and there  
Left weeping that she could not share  
Her husband’s hard imprisonment.

All speech, all intercourse—more hard  
Made thus to both—between them barr'd.  
Suppose the case, O man! O woman!—you  
Who love and live, one single life for two—  
Whose looks engender liking each for each,  
When lips have souls, and eyes are bright with speech,  
Whose love gives beauty to the looks which none—  
Not even *she*, had at her ocean-birth,  
The far-sung Aphrodite, nor the Sun  
Incarnate in a man to fire the hearts of Earth.

And then the small civilities  
Seen ever through enlarging eyes;  
The simple words to which there springs  
The answering heart; the little gifts  
Which passion for the giver lifts  
Above the broad largesse of kings;  
All these they had—all these, alas!  
They have not;—yet it came to pass

That the young husband found the power  
By vulgar means, or by the show  
Of his most great and wordless woe,  
To bribe the jailor of that Tower—  
The cage through century-laden time  
Of criminals who knew no crime.

So Seymour, watched and guarded well,  
Went up the dark'ning river, fearing  
Each time might be the last, to see  
The one he loved to see, and tell  
The love so often told which she  
Heard often, never tired of hearing.  
Yet neither when they met was free  
To revel in a simple bliss :  
The thought what time to come might be  
Corrupted half the sweets of this.  
They feared lest prying eyes might view  
And tongues disclose their natural guilt ;  
And in that mighty fear they built

Their hopes up higher, bolder-breasted,  
And strung themselves a deed to do  
That agony of love suggested.

“Alas!” she cried one night—“alas!  
That thou by stealth shouldst come and pass,  
As if thou wert a thief to shun  
The light of day—man’s sight and touch!  
Ah me! what evil hast thou done,  
Unless the loving me be such?  
’Tis hard, this fear that we, who know  
We do what law and nature bid,  
Should be *found out*, as ’twere, and chid  
And chastened, both—and wherefore so?”

Then he: “It shall no longer be;  
We suffer, and we must be free.  
Release from chains!—the wrongly bound  
Should find it, and it shall be found.”



“What!” she exclaimed, with quickened breath—

“What, Seymour, wouldst thou counsel death?

No other means can I divine.”

“A gentler way, sweet wife of mine;”

He answered, smiling. “Death would suit

The plans of others, not our own;

We must escape! A separate route

Will take us to a point foreknown.

We part but once, dear love, at starting,

And meet for aye, for no more parting.”

“Escape!” she cried. “What magic power

Could loose thee from that moated tower?

And I, a woman, to evade

My vigilant guards! Ah! less afraid

I should be to face death than dare

A risk so great, which thou must share!

The thought appals!” Then he: “We run

No greater risk than we have done,

And, doing as we do, do now.

Thou couldst not live without me? Thou!"

"No, no!" she cried. Then he: "How sweet  
These meetings! Could we cease to meet?  
And, meeting thus, be sure some friend  
Will turn informer in the end;  
Then shall we find less means for flight—  
Far less than those I have in sight.  
What worse can chance us than a grave  
Dug by th' attempt?—and thou canst brave  
This last result. But if kind fate  
Should grant success, my own, my life!  
O! what would that not compensate?  
Think calmly first, my wedded wife,  
Before thou answerest?" Slowly she  
Replied: "I will dare all for thee!  
Act thou, and venture, and prepare;  
A woman's courage is to bear.  
Lead on in all that fits the man,  
I follow as my weakness can."

Then did they plot, if that could be  
When he was all device and speech,  
Employed to strengthen and to teach,  
And show the blest results ; and she  
All promise, somewhat dashed by fears,  
And confidence that shone through tears.

And Seymour fled—how glad to fly  
From that strong tyrannous Tower ! Much need  
There was of patience, time, and heed,  
And gold-dust sprinkled lavishly  
In watchful eyes, and failure too,  
And plots and plans devised anew,  
In better time and altered shape,  
Ere such a prisoner could escape  
From such a prison ; but at last  
He saw it disappearing fast  
Upon his anxious view, and then  
When all its turret-tops away  
Had died in ev'ning's gathering grey,  
He felt himself a man 'mid men.

Away! no time for sleep or rest  
With such a spur within his breast  
    As Hope and Memory both supplied,  
The bitter past, the future chance ;  
    By boat, on horse, to row and ride—  
Away! The morning's earliest glance  
Will wake a fierce and villanous pack  
To bark and follow on the track ;  
Hired to pursue whatever flies,  
When he who feeds them slips the ties.  
Behold him rushing on—away !  
With the last look of dying day.  
Through wet and dry, o'er plain and hill,  
The midnight hears him thundering still ;  
And the dull hours 'twixt gloom and shine,  
When revellers sleep away their wine,  
And Labour hath not left his bed,  
Are scared by that quick passing tread.

And lo! the day is born—the day  
That rises, whether foul or clear;  
Too unconcerned with man to pay  
Respect to human smile or tear:  
Yet such a day, all days beyond  
For trembling Love; for on its wings  
In flight from East to West it brings  
His freedom, or a closer bond.

Hark! the alarm from the dusky tower  
Rings out, and awakens the tools of Power.  
There's a throng in its courts, and the sharp air sounds  
With the voices of men, like the bay of hounds.  
Fiery in hurry, and fierce in mind,  
With curses on him whom they fly to find,  
They are off—and Silence is left behind.

On, Seymour! If thou spare thy steed  
In mercy, there are those in chase  
Whose merciless fangs, when won the race,  
Will make thy very heart to bleed.

Ha! bravely ridden! and now the breeze  
Blows feebly from the wished-for sea;—  
'Tis the first breath of liberty.

One hour more, and no need to urge  
His worn steed; what he seeks he sees,  
And he draws rein upon the pebbly verge  
Of ocean, and can hear the ceaseless surge  
Of its green depths, and sees its boundless breast  
Heave with an irrepressible unrest,  
Its billows singing as they mount: 'The slaves  
Of man are men—God only binds the waves.'

He cast his loving eyes around  
To find the treasure, which, when found,  
Were greater than e'er blest the hands  
Of miners in their golden sands;  
And in the offing, 'gainst the sky,  
Large-limb'd, he saw a French ship lie,  
With ready crew and wing-like sail  
Distended to the western gale.

“*She* must be there!” he cried;—the thought  
Was fever to his haste. He sought  
And quickly found a boat, and plied  
The foaming oars, and up the side  
Of the tall ship, with clamb’ring feet,  
Gaining the deck, he sprang to greet  
His faithful wife, and each and all  
Were startled by his passionate call  
On his one love. Alas! the name  
Was strange, and then the answer came  
From careless lips; but like a dart  
Thrown at him to transfix his heart:  
“No woman here! our hours are numbered  
For work; ’tis better when time presses  
Not to be worried or encumbered  
By female tongues and female dresses.”

O love! O fate!—What best? O say,  
Shall he fly? Whither fly?—or stay?

What think? And she—ah! where is she?

Past onward where her steps are free,

Or in the land whose shores enclose

For every friend a thousand foes?

No trace—no guess—with troubled heart

And mind toss'd as the waves, he found

A vessel straining for the start;

And when the second day came round,

He trod alone the Flemish coast

With freedom won, and all beside it lost.

The misty coast was disappearing fast

On Seymour's vision, gazing to the last,

When, as it seemed, with body worn and mind

Fluttering in haste to leave some fear behind,

Two cavaliers reached Lee by boat: the one

Smaller in size, but first in rank, had on

A manly doublet coarse; large French-like hose

Adorned his legs; in cumbrous guise the clothes



Sat on his limbs ; and, to complete the suit,  
Black hat and cloak he wore, and russet boot  
With red-grained top ; and from his cloak below  
A useless rapier's point stuck out for show.  
Why doth he stretch his gaze in search of things  
It takes no hold of? Why with sudden flings  
Of passion doth his breast heave, as with sighs  
And feminine tremblings, and quick tones he cries,  
“ Not here ! worst error of a hapless life,  
When Love misleads the husband and the wife ;  
O cruel chance ! to fail at last when all  
Before it was success. Heav'n hear my call !  
Give me my Seymour ! ” Then the hot tears came,  
And sobbing shook that slimly-fashioned frame ;  
And all the abandonment of loud distress  
Displaced the shelter of the masculine dress.  
No longer now by that thin veil concealed,  
In beauty and in grief the woman stood revealed.

O Arabella! such a sight of woe  
Might touch, if aught could touch, a despot's heart.  
Two loves, by nature, in one channel flow,  
Then man steps in, and turns with impious art  
Their streams to run to waste because they run apart.

No sign of him ; and yet to stay  
Were madness now—she must away !  
Away without him—him with whom  
The hated Tower itself would bloom  
Into an Eden. Half compelled,

Half led by reasons strong and clear—  
No hope, no help, but one in sight,  
She hurried to a ship that held  
Its pinions plumed for ready flight ;  
Kept back by love, thrust on by fear,  
And half refusing, half consenting,  
She filled the freshening air with shrill lamenting.  
“ Why ever thus ? Death seems delayed,  
That grief may live, and I be made

A mark for every shaft alike  
Where not an arrow fails to strike ;  
Allowed my life, and yet no more  
    Allowed the love that makes its all !  
To shore ! put back, ye men, to shore !  
    With Seymour I would fly or fall !  
Ye will not, cold and savage crew ?  
Love never wore a smile for you !  
Then on, if such must be my fate ;  
On, quicker than a monarch's hate !  
He is before ! Will join me !—No !  
    That day on me will never shine ;  
Hope is a flower that cannot grow  
    From such a barren past as mine !”

Then did she cease from lack of strength,  
    And yet her future grew in light,  
As o'er the sandy waves at length  
    The spires of Calais rose to sight ;

And distant bells sent forth their voices,  
As when a populous town rejoices.  
She, even she, forgot the past,  
And dreamt a change might come at last.  
Again she trod the green resorts,  
Far from the blare and blaze of courts,  
    Which Fancy spread before her view,  
And wore away the easy hours  
'Mid scenes which Nature robed in flowers,  
    And jewelled with the dew.  
She saw—to her what sight more dear ?  
A visionary husband near.  
She heard—what sound to her more sweet ?  
The pattering of her children's feet ;  
And hoped—away with hope, away !  
Hope lives by night, but dies with the undreaming day.  
  
What thing there through the salt haze looms  
    Betwixt her vessel and the shore ?  
No spirit from the dead men's tombs  
    Could scare the eye of mortal more.

Large and more large it grows and clearer,  
And guns boom from the deck, now nearer,  
Of an armed ship, that o'er the sea  
    Comes swooping with its high-beaked head,  
    And England's regal flag unfurled ;  
And cruel as a fiend—as he,  
    The primal Devil who misled  
    The woman who was half the world—  
Its chief prey she who saw the town,  
    And dreamt of bliss. O Power, above  
The law of nature!—stricken down  
    With freedom's blessing half secured,  
    And worse—how worse to be endured,  
    When half in reach of love.

Ah! Arabella, better find  
Reception from the unpersecuting wave,  
    Than seek it from thy kind ;  
    Alas! they only save

To torture ere they strike. Poor hapless thing !  
The ocean were more speedy and more just ;  
It kills and lies not—rather this than trust  
A kinsman and a king !

No pity, no release : the hand  
Of tyranny was roughly laid  
On its fair victim, who was made  
To tread again that hated land,  
And, locked in its old Tower, renew  
The sight of grief half-hidden from view.

“ Four years ; an unoffending bird,  
Shut in so cold a cage ! ” she cries :  
“ O surely God, who hath not heard  
My prayers, must love mine enemies ;

That God who gives them hearts so bold

To do this harm on me now done,

Who makes their feet so swift to run,

And hands so strong to hold.

Wronged by a king and queen!—indeed

The regal woman could enforce

Respect from those she made to bleed.

Vain was she; yet with nerves as coarse

And strongly drawn as man's, and mind

Licentious in its queenly kind,

Which yet could brace its spirit tightly

To rule a turbulent land uprightly,

And too, at times, what asks for art

More rare, the passions of her heart.

Heaven help her! Dead, she left a name

For private flaws and public fame

Composed of glory and of shame.

But he, the man whose sex should be

More great, is smaller-souled than she;

And with such doubtful qualities born,

As might a pedant's chair adorn,

But on a throne, with power to wreak  
His will, are mischievous or weak.  
Weak toward the men of strength, but strong  
To load the weak like me with wrong."

And here the waiting-woman, stung  
By anger, charged with clatt'ring tongue:  
"He fill a throne, that man of all  
The men that live! A huckster's stall  
Would suit him best: there daily placed  
He'd find employment to his taste.  
To gather pennies year by year  
In selling cheap provisions dear,  
Would fit his mental range;  
He's shrewd enough to bargain there  
With squabbling housewives for his ware,  
And cheat them in the change.  
Out on such king-ship! He a king!  
A misbegotten clumsy thing;



A poor sham king, like one of those  
Which players do in borrowed clothes,  
The ill-paid parodists of power,  
With paint and tinsel of an hour.  
A warrior who talks loud—and flies ;  
A statesman who speaks less—and lies ;  
Blest with the crown his birthright gave,  
But meant by Nature for a slave.  
Had I my choice——”

Here, as if seeming  
To waken up from some half-dreaming,  
Poor Arabella cut the thread  
Of the maid's sharp discourse, and said :  
“Nay, Madeline, nay—rail not at them  
To whom Heav'n grants a diadem,  
However badly it may sit  
Upon the head it fails to fit.  
If *I* may find some reason good  
For what I speak in wrathful mood,

'Tis in the woe, the long despair  
Of better times that hath so wrench'd  
The strings of this weak brain, and quenched  
The little light that once was there.  
Heaven pardon me! How many more  
Better than I have borne before  
What I now bear? Say, what am I  
To her who lost her youthful head  
Upon the bloody greensward nigh?  
Incarnate worth and wisdom bled,  
When she, whose momentary crown  
Held death within, was striken down.  
All that an angel could present  
Of piety and beauty, blent  
Its charms in her, and all that age  
Heaps up to make a mortal sage.

“And I have thought myself to take  
My life, oft, for the sorrow's sake.  
And then a face looked down, divine  
In might and meekness, into mine.

And I heard, while ineffably  
Love lay in the reproachful eye,  
'What have I done, what borne for thee—  
The ruler's hate, the jeering throng,  
The plaited thorns, the shameful thong,  
And horror of th' accursed tree ;  
And yet *thou* canst not bear awhile  
The wrongs of those I died to save ;  
Let them repent !' And then he gave  
A smile—a sweet and wondrous smile—  
Which said that if they would be whole  
Of all their maladies of soul,  
And fall and touch his garment's hem,  
There might be mercy e'en for them."

Then she began, in absent tone,  
Singing a song, as if her brain  
Was listening to another's strain,  
While her lips sang her own.

---

“Ambition hath a life to give  
Of power and daily-fed renown,  
And star and coronet and crown,  
But this hath small delight—and why?  
Honour must die.

And Pleasure hath a life to give  
Of crowded halls and love and wine,  
And sounds that charm, and gems that shine.  
But this hath small delight—and why?  
Pleasure must die.

And Learning hath a life to give  
Of Wisdom culled from every clime,  
And all the treasured thought of Time.  
But this hath small delight—and why?  
Knowledge must die.

And Christ, too, hath a life to give  
Of supersensual joy, that lies  
In an eternal Paradise.  
Be this my chos'n delight— and why?  
This will not die.”

---

Thus sang she what she liked with liking fonder

Than aught beside—the Heaven above.

And yet her unstaid thoughts would wander

To the low earth she had no cause to love.

“O mistress dear!” poor Madeline said,

Or rather sobbed—and, weeping, turned her head.

Then she, as musing: “Hear my dream:

They sometimes are the things they seem.

A man approached me in the guise

Of noble birth, with brow austere,

And fixed me with ambitious eyes,

And holding forth a crown, ‘Behold,’

He cried, ‘this rim of magic gold!

Take it and wear it. Wherefore fear?

Two mighty nations shall obey

Thy rule, and thou be great as they.’

“And then a child of mine—a child!

Have I a son? My thoughts are wild.

Came near, a noble little thing  
That reproduced my lord, and borrowed  
Its bloom from me before I sorrowed  
So often that it all took wing.  
It held a flower-wreath, bright with dew,  
Itself had woven from the spring,  
And cried with earnest meaning, ' Choose  
Between the crown and this ; refuse  
The one, thou canst not wear the two !'  
With what delight—what need to tell  
The crown I chose ?—that coronet  
Of natural gems. My eyes were wet  
With grateful tears, and as they fell  
Upon the leaves, my heart's blood stopt  
To see them blight where'er they dropt.  
'Tis thus some fatal magic still  
Turns all my little good to ill.  
Hence, ye detested crowns !—away !  
I would ye not ! But say—ah ! say,  
Why, that another's days may shine,  
Is light for ever shut from mine ?

My heart!—my husband! · By God's grace,  
Shall I —when shall I quit this hateful place? ”

When thy tears shall cease from raining,  
And thy voice from its complaining ;

When thy heart shall cease from beating

For thy own or others' grief,

Shalt thou find relief ;

When thy voice shall cease repeating,

“ When—O when ? ”

And in long procession go

Sable horse and silent men

In the paid pretence of woe.

Unveil the future. See the funeral train,

Slow pacing hearse and nodding plume ;

The glories of the dead. Ah! wouldst not thou

Have changed them for one hour of living peace ?

Peace to thee now !

Peace in the tomb !

Enter where those illustrious in decease  
Are laid in honour—'tis thine own.  
Its shrines and aisles the western abbey spreads,  
A forest interlaced in stone.  
Its pillars bear on their unbending heads  
The weight of ages. Lo! the vaulted space  
Where she of thy own race,  
A Queen discrowned, a Queen beheaded lies,  
There take thy first repose!  
Even a monarch cannot bid thee rise  
To be fresh-tortured. Thy best obsequies  
Are some few natural tears which those,  
Thy friends, shed o'er thy virtues and thy woes,  
With whispered doubts and sidelong fear,  
For vengeance is alive, and things that live may hear.

Enough! Death comes to all. If future hours  
Will bring their thorns, the present hath its flowers.  
Then change the scene. Unbar yon palace gate,  
Hearts, there, are small, though men are great.



Because a woman hath been buried nigh,

Must joy, too, die ?

Leave her to her narrow tomb,

And enter thou that glittering room.

Joy lives therein to love, and drink, and sing ;

To tread and to retread the ring

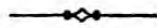
Of riot, on the floor where sport

The gilded satellites of Court,

And flush the craven spirit of a king.

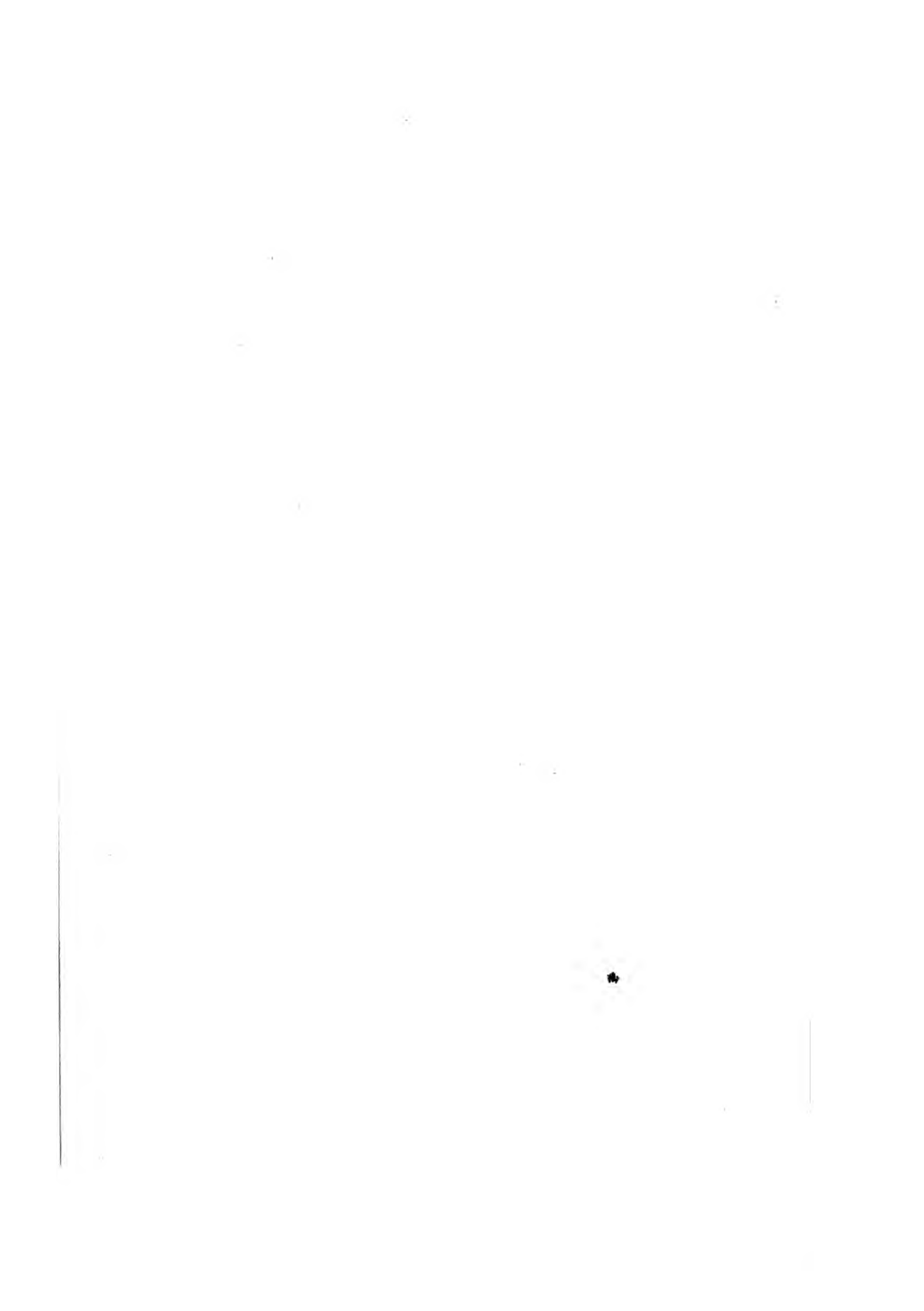
LORD COBHAM.

(*TEMP. HENRY V.*)



PHILIP HOWARD, EARL OF  
ARUNDEL.

(*TEMP. ELIZABETH.*)



LORD COBHAM.

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PHILIP HOWARD, EARL OF  
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(*TEMP. ELIZABETH.*)



LITTLE hath Poet here to tell  
Of story, but before men's eyes  
To set, as best he may devise,  
Two scenes—would they were pondered well  
By him who, whether sage or fool,  
May boast the awful power to rule.  
The thought on which these visions turn  
Is one of pregnant consequence,  
Which all may grasp with little sense,—  
None are too old to learn.

Then let us live in the far days  
Of the fifth Henry. Fix your gaze  
Upon a prisoner, in a room,  
    Made, and no more, to guard and keep ;  
    Where beds are not composed for sleep,  
And windows manufacture gloom.

    A noble languished in the Tower.  
Of course, in the large eyes of Power,  
He had done wrong ; but in his own  
    Being guiltless, took the liberty  
    To mark his sense of right and fly.  
Then high rewards, his flight being known,  
Were offered to whoe'er would track  
The truant lord, and bring him back ;  
But vainly. For four blessed years  
    Safely he walked, and freely thought,  
    And in that period plotted naught  
Against the State to rouse its fears,

Nor wronged a single man, to draw  
Upon his head the avenging law.

One spiteful day—'twas near to Wales ;  
O'er breezy hills, through peaceful vales  
He roamed, and cried, " How rich is he  
To whom this spacious scene is free  
For daily use. Why bow and bend  
At courts, when Nature is his friend,  
And only changes her delights  
And not her favours—rest by nights  
And healthy toil ?" Thus far he said,  
A grasp upon his shoulder laid  
He turned, and in th' aggressor's face  
He saw confinement and disgrace  
Written for himself, with death to close  
The vista of his earthly woes.

So view him now restored to dwell,  
Close-guarded, in his hopeless cell ;

Brave, virtuous, what is that to them  
Who hate his faith, and seek to stem  
The course of thought—when not the same  
With theirs—by famine, chains, and flame ?  
In due time, in the sullen dawn  
Of a damp daylight, he is drawn  
To a new spot—small comfort yields  
That change of scene—St. Giles's Fields.  
A chain about his middle bound,  
They swing him upward from the ground,  
Then light a fire—say, can they tell  
How fiercely such shall glow in hell ?—  
Beneath him, that the mounting heat  
May sear his face, and singe his feet,  
Till higher, broader grown, it wraps  
    His whole frame in a smoky shroud,  
And many a pitiless flame-tongue laps  
    The juice of life, and crackles loud.  
Enough ! The work is finished. Can  
That charred mass have been once a man ?

Why treated thus? List ye the cause  
Who work the engine of the laws.  
He would not, of men's threats afraid,  
Adore the bread some baker made,  
When the priest's word, like Moses' rod,  
Changed portions of a loaf to God.  
He would not grant, in many a clime  
There might be met with, at one time,  
Ten thousand bits, which some would call  
Mere bread, but were not bread at all,  
By human hands profanely sliced,  
But each an individual Christ.  
He scorned to reverence skull or bone,  
Though part of a saint's skeleton.  
Nor in a living man could see—  
Weak, bad, or mad—the right to be  
A substitute for Deity.

“Forgive them, Father!” ere he died  
From their rough handling, Cobham cried.



God's witness! acting out his thought  
Who gave the mercy which he sought.

---

Now shift the scene. On weighty wings  
Two centuries, not full-fledged, have flown,  
Belief hath changed with other things,  
And a great Queen is on the throne.  
Behold another noble! Time  
Hath given him forty years as yet.  
His look, all sweet and half sublime,  
Once seen, not easy to forget;  
Skin neighbouring on a swarthy dye,  
Tall stature, and imposing eye.  
His father was beloved by Fame  
As Norfolk's Duke, yet could not claim  
Exemption from attainting charge  
Which rested on his race at large;  
For his great-grandsire failed to shun  
The pest, and left it to his son.

Now he himself is doomed to pass  
Through wasting shame and weary hour  
His prison-life—and where? alas!  
Could that be elsewhere than the Tower?

There, on its hard walls he had graved  
The hope through which he should be saved  
In distant worlds, not this he trod  
'Mid men less placable than God,  
And these the words:—"The more of woe,  
For sake of Christ, we bear below,  
The more of glory and of love  
We shall with Christ too share above."  
He trusts—there's something in belief  
E'en when 'tis wrong, if Faith be next  
In rank where Charity is chief—  
That his caged limbs and spirit vex'd  
Are offerings made for sin that rise  
In incense to the grateful skies.

And he had fled ere now, to be  
In body and in spirit free,  
But, on the coast of Sussex seized,  
His pious persecutors pleased  
To put him in this place of grief,  
For rightly holding wrong belief.  
And what denies he?—the same things  
Which hurried Cobham to the stake ;  
So great in the pure eyes of kings  
The change instructive years may make.  
Faith grew, not love, in times between  
King Henry and the maiden Queen.

A charge, too, rests upon his head  
Of fostering hopes to mount the bed  
Of Scottish Mary ; yet if this  
Were true, why did Elizabeth  
Engage with her imperial breath  
To give him her fair hand to kiss,

In sign of grace regained, and all  
His lost restored, if he would fall  
Down at her feet, and at her bid  
Swear not to think the things he did ?

'Twas proved—no more—his early home  
Had sought him, and he turned to Rome.  
“But,” some may interpose, “if not  
Proved guilty, yet the frequent plot ;  
The means, unscrupulous as the ends,  
Devised by Mary and her friends,  
And widely talked of, made him known  
As one who *might* subvert a throne ;  
And so state-reasoners deemed it wrong  
    To build on chance, or risk delay,  
And solved a problem, which was long  
    And difficult, in their own rough way.”

It may be—yet the way *was* rough ;  
And though the Queen had ground enough

To shut him up, she scarce could hope,  
By tempting him to curse the Pope  
He loved in spirit, and to save  
    His lands and liberty, forsake  
    His soul's allegiance, thus to make  
A trusty subject of a knave.

His wife, his children, pray for grace  
To see the father's, husband's face.  
One child had never blest his sight,  
    Born since they shut his prison-door.  
Then seek the Queen. Demand no right.  
    Ask mercy ; beg, beseech, implore !  
Attack the woman in her breast.  
'Tis vain—let History tell the rest.  
    He will not re-believe ?—the curse  
Of Heav'n is on him. Treat him worse !  
Fine, chain him, starve him. Run the range  
Of outrage ; yet will he not change ?

Relent not—give the system scope  
 And time to work. Feed him with hope,  
 But keep him to his jail, no more  
 To leave till Death knocks at the door.

What *is* Belief? Unmanned by pain,  
 If one should swear that night is day,  
 Or says whate'er his jailors say,  
 Is that consent of heart or brain?  
 Or is it that Power strives to set  
 Its foot upon unpleasant creeds  
 Which living men may fear to hold,  
 And so in ages unborn yet  
 They may die out, like fire that needs  
 Some stirring that it grow not cold?  
 But what becomes of faith on force  
 Thus founded? From a bitter source  
 Can sweet and healing streams arise?  
 What soul hath that belief which cries,

“Leave me to rest in peace. Thy will  
Shall be my will ; and thou alone  
Shalt make my thoughts : though vile and dim,  
I’ll call them clear and good, until  
A stronger oust thee from thy throne,  
And then I’ll think with him ?”

What need of books ? What need to know ?  
What need of hearts to feel ? For lo !  
In place of arguments and facts,  
The torturing chain, and blood-red axe !  
Where prisons teach theology,  
And preachers shout, “ Believe or die ! ”  
Bequeathing to a future race  
This doctrine of the Tower,  
That Power is Knowledge, in the place  
Of Knowledge being Power.

**EARL OF SURREY**





## EARL OF SURREY.



**I**F in the clash of mimic fight,  
Upon the tourney's cruel field,  
Where floating dust half-veiled from sight  
The broken spear, the battered shield,  
And horse and rider senseless laid  
In the rough game our fathers played,  
The bravest knights who longed to close  
In conflict with less noble foes,  
Swerved from their headlong course in fear  
To meet the shock of Surrey's spear ;

If, foremost 'mid his fellow men,  
    He raised his laurel-shaded brow,  
And this advantaged Surrey then,  
    What doth it profit Surrey now ?

Though on his father's battle-plains,  
    Where spear-thrusts were no longer blunt,  
The Howard blood within his veins  
    Compelled Earl Surrey to the front,  
He cannot give a draft on Fame  
In quittance of his present shame.  
Brave, courteous, he could rage or melt  
    In war or love, and won the prize,  
When his lips sang the pains he felt—  
    The tyranny of Beauty's eyes.  
For man will rather wear the chains,  
Life-forged, so oft where woman reigns,  
Than for one instant suffer those  
Which despots of his sex impose.

Shut in this Tower he cannot move  
In fight, and loses heart for love.  
A rival's heavy purse could win  
False witness his own home within,  
And money made the charges clear  
Which seized his goods, and sent him here!

Here!—Would his better lot were cast  
In Florence, as in days now past,  
When on his helmet's top he wore  
The challenge-glove of Geraldine,  
His vaunted love, his chosen Queen;  
And knight and steed went down before  
That onset, as Lord Surrey spurr'd,  
'Mid sounding trump and urging shout,  
In hope which past renown held out,  
And strength which present love conferred.  
That lance, as rival ranks confessed,  
Was never idly placed in rest.  
Defeat ne'er lowered that haughty crest.

First soldier in the listed field,  
He bore away a golden shield  
Which the Duke gave him, as the meed  
Of graceful act and doughty deed.  
O Surrey! had the Spartan's doom  
    Been thine, and on it thou hadst been  
Borne by thy comrades to the tomb,  
    Wept by the world and Geraldine,  
Thou wouldst have felt the fall in war—  
    The death by some fair-striking foe  
With stronger arm—less grievous far  
    Than that thy noble blood should flow  
Like some marauding beast's that long  
Had worked the hen-roost nightly wrong,  
But, caught, is hanged with blow and jest,  
That fowls may live and farmers rest.

    In this depressing Tower, in vain  
Would Surrey tax his wealthy brain,

To pour, as was his wont to do,  
The rhymes that answered to his flame,  
And ever as his passion grew  
More fast and fanciful they came.  
The lyre that sang the lover's bliss  
Of being tortured, rang like this.

---

Oh! who to novel phrase could shape  
The stale encomia of the grape,  
And sing of men inspired by wine—  
The clay which drinking makes divine,  
Yet fondly deem his lyre could ring  
With other than an ancient string?

The bow may shoot an oft-shot shaft,  
The statesman may repeat his craft,  
The miser search and search for gold,  
And books on books make students old,  
But weak and wearying were the rhyme  
That told of these the thousandth time.

And though the lover fume and fret  
For charms he fancies matchless yet,

And, warm with unaffected fire,  
Exhaust the phrases of desire,  
Fair looks are found by him who wills,  
And passion 's older than the hills.

Still, still with me can Love prevail  
To make me tell an oft-told tale.  
I speak, perforce, of what I feel,  
A wound I scarcely wish to heal ;  
Words, like wine brimming from a cup,  
Come from my surcharged bosom up.

Yet might I urge excuse, and say,  
“ Go! view the reason for my lay,  
And when your wondering eyes have seen  
So fair a world in Geraldine,  
Absolve me of my talk, and blame  
The charms that light a larger flame.”

But, wrong or right, it matters not ;  
Fixed is my fate, and stern my lot ;  
Enchained in mind, bewitched in heart,  
I play an incoherent part—  
Say what I would not say—condemn  
What lovers do, then act with them.

I would be cold, and tamely burn.  
I fly—how short a way—and turn.  
'Mid smiling crowds I walk forlorn,  
And hug the slavery I scorn.  
I mourn how high my folly flies,  
Yet would not for the world be wise.

---

But now, approach him, sitting there  
Dejected in that broken chair,  
Whose legless corner 'gainst a wall  
Is propp'd, significant of fall—  
The fall that unto dust hath lowered,  
And death, the gallant house of Howard.  
He thinks of all that was his own  
    In days when, fired by present bliss,  
Hope drew more largely on the unknown—  
    To end in such a scene as this!

Go near-- he writes. Write what he will,  
His fate will colour it perforce,



As the soil modifies a rill

To touch its state or change its course.

His thoughts are other than they were ;

His pen is servant to his brain ;

Go nearer—read what's written there,

Couched in the new poetic strain,

Which he first brought from far, men say,

And added to our English lay—

The verse that freely flows along,

And moves its feet in rhymeless song.



Why am I thus? What crime hath sent me here ?

This durance—I have not upon myself

Myself imposed it. If the will could wait

Upon the wish for orders, I would step

From out this low imprisonment, and raise

My head 'mid freemen—thus far pure of blame.

How many, by their own deed, sell their souls

To a captivity outfacing mine !

Misellus was the self-bound slave of gold,  
Engrossed by that sole passion where success  
Doth not enjoy its object. The thief filches  
The purse he covets, to employ its store  
In the exhaustive process of debauch.  
And if the lover hearkens when young lips  
Breathe the faint "Yes!" say, doth he stand far off  
In mild regard, nor use the means by which  
He's summoned to a dearer intimacy?  
But, prisoned in his mind by the strong lust  
Of what was useless all, Misellus lived.  
He sighed for comforts, dared not pay for them.  
He loved society, but shrank to ask  
His friends to come and eat and drink his gold.  
He clung to earth, but summing up the cost  
Of probable cure when ill, preferred the risk,  
And lost his life, but saved his silver. Death  
And Life to him had but small difference.  
He was thought rich when living; when the dust  
Was shovelled o'er him, he was known to be so.

Amander was the fool of an idea.  
He deemed that all earth's separate excellence

Was centralized in one created thing.  
 He saw no sun but in two lustrous eyes ;  
 But in one voice could he hear melody.  
 He never rose to shake the manacles  
 From off his spirit, and which girt it round  
 From intercourse with broad humanity.  
 When this exacting Idol cast him off  
 For some new votary, Passion whispered him,  
 “ One flower in one small garden hath been plucked,  
 Therefore the World ’s a desert. Canst thou live  
 To think those lips are press’d, but not by thee ?  
 That there are arms round that voluptuous form  
 Not thine ? Go, kill thyself ! ” And so he did.

Polites was a statesman. He, as seemed,  
 Made use of his own freedom to impose  
 Compulsion upon others. Being in power  
 He was a Lord, and cried out, “ Go ! ” and “ Do ! ”  
 And had a rod in waiting for refusal.  
 But, to command the many men, he bent  
 Subservient to the few. Into the shrine  
 Where Truth should dwell—(and only Truth makes  
 free)—

He thrust expediency ; and when he fell,  
By fault or chance, what matters ?—but he fell,  
And, falling, dragged his fetters down with him.  
He saw another hold the reins he held,  
Saw nothing else. His soul grew lean, and so  
He waited at official doors which once  
Flew open to his step, content to crouch  
Where he commanded ; he could gather crumbs  
Beneath the tables where he whilom sat  
The governor of the feast. The rock was not  
Less hard, because his own hands chained him there.  
Hopeless he hoped ; and balked desire became  
The vulture that devoured his useless life.

The Earth hath things of True and Right, which  
taste

Sweeter than freedom lost or country banned  
Lie bitter on the palate. Sparta saw  
Chelonis seek her sire Cleombrotus,  
When her own husband shook him from his seat.  
She left th' ambitious partner of her bed :  
For what to her was the reflected light  
Of conjugal splendour, or the pomp of dress,

Or courtly suppliants, when Injustice dwelt  
The neighbour of a throne? Far better share  
Her father's flight, the exile or the chain,  
Bondage and slandered name. He needed friends,  
And she was those to him—his friend she was  
When all the world which she had left could give  
Of pride or pleasure asked her for his foe.

But time pass'd on, and when Leonidas—  
The second of the name—reclutched the reins,  
And drove her husband forth, she turned to him.  
“Chelonis! daughter!” cried Leonidas;  
“Why leave me now? Thou wentest with thy sire  
When he could give thee nothing but a share  
Of his own trouble—hunger and bad words,  
And all the ills of the successful man.  
Now that my fortune is o'er-brimmed with good  
Dip in thy hand, and take thereout thy fill.”  
Then she: “Accursed of the Gods am I,  
That both my husband and my sire refuse  
To hear my prayers. Might seizes upon power,  
And uses it as such a conquerer would.  
I went with thee because thou wast oppress'd;

Thou art th' oppressor now—a prisoner he,  
Or exile, thou a king. Can prisons shut  
The light from conscience? or can banishment  
Exile the sense of sympathy? I go  
With these because they want what thou hast got.  
Enjoy thy pleasures—here are mine!" she said;  
And lifting up one child, Cleombrotus  
Leading the other by the hand, she left  
The regal presence calmly, and with it  
Ease, and repute, and many-sided power,  
To welcome what the world calls misery.

As for myself—enough that I have lived  
And laboured. What have I got out from life?  
Sore travail and vexed spirit! Vanity!  
Where vanity is these will not cease to be.  
Tyrants and victims go to the same place.  
Shut up a fool, if thus thou canst shut out  
His folly from him. Still might I have chased  
The phantom Love, but now these sober walls  
Clasp me too tight for that. Yet have I loved,  
And sung of love; and had I not been barred  
From following Fancy's lead o'er rotten ground,

I might have on the altar of my God  
Placed Geraldine my idol——

---

And here the strain broke off, as 'twere  
The time for writing verse had past,  
And life, with hope and joy and care,  
Was fading on his vision fast.  
Half in another world he seemed  
To stand, where two great confines kiss ;  
So placed, no wonder if he deemed  
'Twas folly to look back on this.

A plaintive letter, ere the end  
Fell on him, noble Surrey penn'd,  
And sent it to his judges. Send  
To the wild waves to stop and hear,  
And cry unto the rocks " Give ear ! "

And thus he wrote :—“ If not to live  
Be granted, yet let Mercy give  
A reason for my death, though late—  
The proofs that justify my fate ;  
Dubbed traitor, confined in a jail,  
I know the sum, I ask detail—  
Tell me my faults. In pity make  
My errors clear, for Christ’s own sake,  
Who loves the Godlike words that win  
A dying sinner from his sin.  
I will repent. I’ll think it kind  
In him who humbles heart and mind  
To their own selves, nor needs abase  
The body in this loathsome place.  
If I have borne—that point I yield—  
King Edward’s arms upon my shield,  
My fathers claimed the right of old  
That right should to their heir belong ;  
But if he hath been overbold,  
I pray you pardon him the wrong.



Yet should my prayers be idle all

To win, however slight a boon,

And if the fatal blow must fall,

Let it—my last request—fall soon.

Soon let my spirit take its flight.

The noisome prison and its fare,

Cold gloom and pestilential air,

So sicken one who loves the light ;

I do protest, my fellow-men,

I perish daily in this den !”

They read his letter. What ensued ?

His judges, did it change their mood ?

Was he released ?—respected more

For all his spirit nobly bore

Than even his noble blood, and praised

For his great feats of arms, and raised

To his old height, and crowned as one

Whom England loved, her poet son ?

The prison doors have open flown,  
A prisoner hath walked forth alone,  
Save with the necessary few  
The jail sends out, a hard-faced crew.  
The last prayers have been faintly said ;  
The axe hath fallen, the life hath fled ;  
And 'neath the long-enduring skies  
A headless corpse on Tower-hill lies.  
That corpse, when breathing and warm-souled,  
Was Surrey's Earl. His tale is told.



**LADY KATHERINE GREY.**



## LADY KATHERINE GREY.



**H**ERE in some cell where light but shines  
To stretch the torture of the day,  
Misfortune marked with early lines  
The meek pale face of Katherine Grey.  
Gentle she surely was, and meek,  
When Pembroke's son, by cruel wile,  
Divorced her from his bed, to seek  
In place of hers Queen Mary's smile ;  
And the weak wife, in patience strong,  
Could calmly bear so great a wrong.

Unfortunate, in truth, was she

Whose father on the scaffold died ;

And whose own love in after-time—

A love by marriage sanctified,

And chosen when her heart was free

To choose — was dealt with as a crime.

No wonder if her cheek grew pale,

And told the misery of her tale.

Much worth there must have been in her

Who won Earl Hertford's love, and still

Could boast no brilliant charms to stir

The passion and enslave the will,

And in whose mind small genius dwelt

To make its wit or wisdom felt.

'Twas, too, most perilous to love one

Whose birth had set her near the throne ;

For love too oft, when once begun,

Goes on to make its likings known,

And he who *here* should dare to wed,

Might win a wife, but lose a head.

The Queen, Elizabeth, besides,  
Hated all bridegrooms and their brides ;  
And nursed, in her imperious way,  
A special hate for Katherine Grey.  
Yet when mistakes and doubts arise,  
    And the sun shines not as it did,  
    'Tis best—so Hertford thought—to bid  
The torch of Hymen light the skies.

The Queen is gone, with hawk and hound,  
To hunt at Eltham's regal ground.  
Down Whitehall Palace steps there steals  
    A woman, trembling as she treads ;  
A veil, profusely spread, conceals  
    Her face and form, like one who dreads  
Lest some unfriendly eye may view  
The thing she longs, yet fears to do.  
Love guides her safely where to go.  
    Smooth flows the course, the path is straight  
    That leads her to the water-gate  
Of a tall house in Cannon Row.



She enters ; climbs the marble stair ;  
A darkened room—one female there—  
Her sister. Two men near her stand :  
    In one a Lutheran priest is seen ;  
    The second, he of noble mien,  
Steps forth and takes her drooping hand.  
Haste ! seal the irrevocable bond.  
Quickly the fatal knot is tied,  
And Katherine stands a happy bride—  
Or should be now—why look beyond ?  
    Yet to her thin lips vainly up  
    Her sister holds the festal cup ;  
She cannot taste, she scarcely dares  
    To meet her husband's glowing eyes,  
But hurriedly down the entrance-stairs  
    Returns like one who shuns surprise  
In a wrong deed ; nor thinks to call  
    Her life her own, until once more  
    She sinks upon the sheltering floor  
Of her own chamber at Whitehall.

Then stolen interviews, whose taste  
Had bitter mingled with the sweet,  
When joy, however great, to meet  
Was dashed with fear, or checked by haste—  
The haste and fear which should be known  
To an unwedded love alone.  
Theirs—which the Queen, not Heav'n, called wrong—  
Could not, alas ! lie hidden long ;  
For slanderous tongues at Court would speak  
What courtly eyes were fain to see,  
How Katherine changed from week to week,  
And was as only wives should be.

Next to Elizabeth's ears there came  
The news, and fury shook her frame.  
“ *She* dare to marry ! Let her live  
To learn what she hath done.” The rest  
Was soon arranged. Like all who give  
Annoyance to the royal breast,

She must in person compensate  
For the imperial wrong—so let  
Her boat pass through the Traitors' Gate,  
Near where her greater sister met  
A bloody death. Her weakness stirs  
Some pity, surely?—Shut her fast  
In the cold Tower, while he is cast  
Within a dungeon far from hers.  
So 'twas. No pity in that place  
She met, nor out of it. In vain  
She prayed and promised—ne'er again  
Might Katherine see her husband's face.

The people cried out "Shame!" Small power  
Had that to free them from the Tower.  
The Plague came and slew many nigh,  
But spared them in its cruelty.  
They took them for a time away  
In mercy! What did Katherine say?

“ No charm hath life, unless I see  
My child and husband, unto me.”  
So wailed she, feeling what she said :  
“ Would, but for them, that I were dead ! ”

The Queen, magnanimously kind,  
Took Hertford's gifts, and yet could fail  
To free the giver from his jail,  
Where both were retransferred, and pined  
From year to weary year. At last,  
When Katherine's life was ebbing fast,  
They took her out, and let her lie  
Until her time should come to die  
In a friend's house. That time, 'twas clear  
To all who saw her face, was near.  
Slowly she sinks, and yet unvest  
But by the wish to look on him.  
Weak one day, weaker still the next,  
A frail thing hanging o'er the brim

Of the great gulf wherein she longs  
To plunge, unfollowed by her wrongs.

She asks that over her be read

The rites the Church prescribes for those  
Whose war with life will shortly close.

Nay—read the Service for the Dead !

She faints ; the last thin colour flies

Her wasted face—not yet! The spark  
Breaks out once more till all be dark ;  
And with low tremulous voice, she cries,  
“ Father of Christ—and mine! O take—  
Take pity on me for *his* sake !”

Still doth her soul withhold its flight.

She lives through all the dreary night ;

And as the cold grey morning breaks,

From her last fitful sleep she wakes ;

Looks falsely strong, then bids them bring

Sir Owen Hopton to her side.

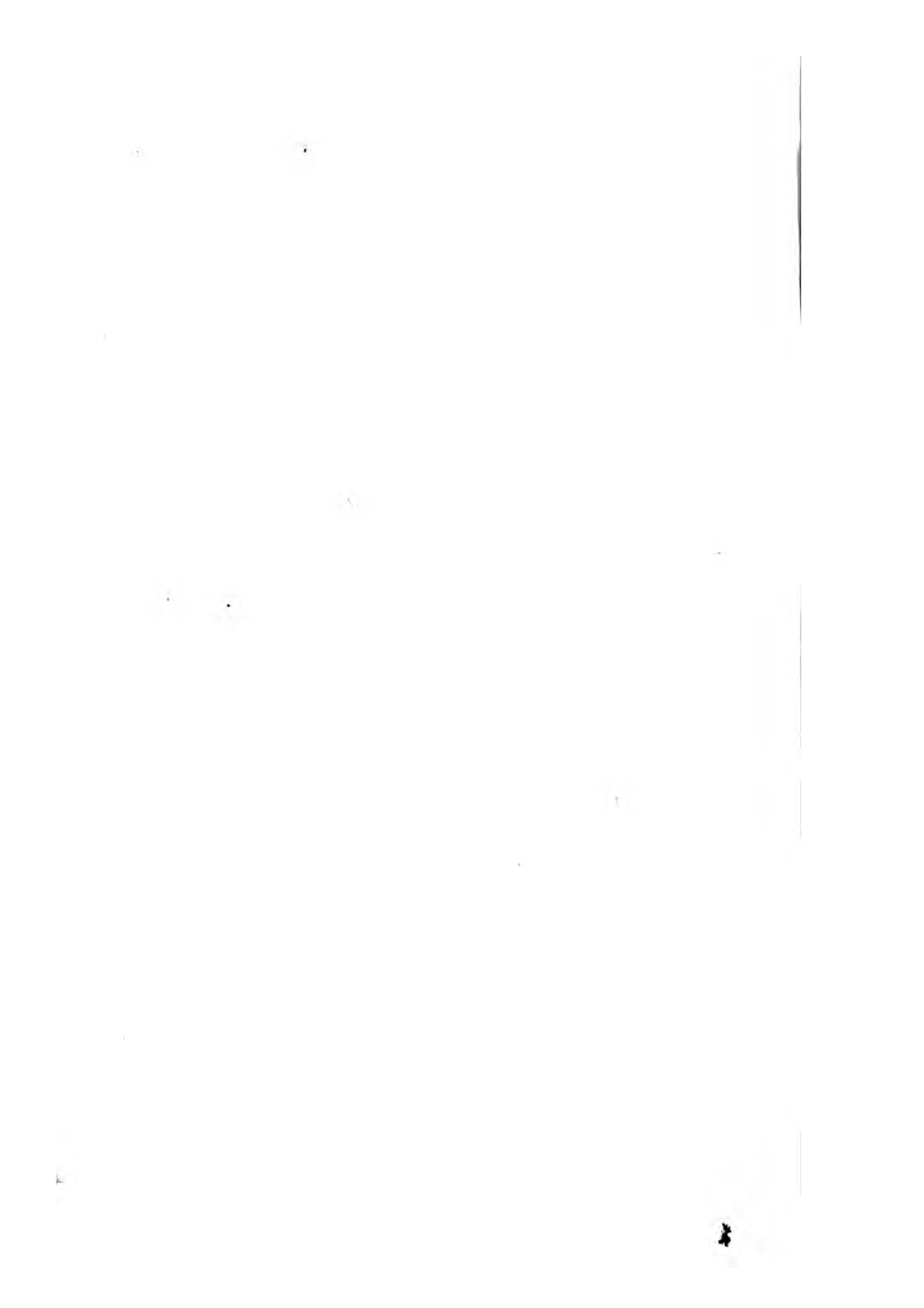
Two rings she gives him. The one ring  
Marked the betrothed, one bless'd the bride :  
“ These for my husband.” Then she hears  
The passing-bell toll, and appears  
Pleased with the sound, and feebly sighs,  
“ 'Tis good so ! ”—listening till she dies.

When kings and queens shake off the coil  
Of life, with regal tasks and toil,  
Should Charity judge not as she  
Judges uncrowned humanity ?  
Elizabeth, when the hand of Death  
Was pressing on the vent for breath,  
Cried, “ I'll not have it : 'tis not meet  
A rascal's son should fill *my* seat ! ”  
Her spirit even then would fain  
Have wreaked its hate on Katherine's son ;  
If Heaven by such words can be won,  
God writes, and preachers read in vain.

'Tis sad, too, what remains untold.  
The husband of the dead grew old  
In prison. When at length released,  
The vigorous play of life had ceased ;  
His health was sapped, his best years fled :  
The courtier lived, the man was dead.  
His soul was crushed ; the chords that rung  
So sweetly once were now unstrung ;  
The cup was drained, the voice was still—  
And why ? It was a woman's will !  
We fools may sigh that God should grant  
    To prison walls to do such things.  
    His purpose seems controlled by kings :  
He sows, and man roots up the plant.

THE NINTH  
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND





THE NINTH  
EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND.



NORTHUMBERLAND'S Ninth Earl one night  
Sat in his room within the Tower,  
Where prison-bondage weighed more light,  
As wine and friendship cheered the hour ;  
For at his festive table now  
Were placed five men of taste who dared  
The rumoured frown on royal brow,  
And praised the man whose gifts they shared.  
Hariot was one, and Hues ; and he,  
With Warner, made a faithful three,

Whom Science by her charms had caught,  
And taught them, willing to be taught.

The other two, as seemed, from birth

Had natures with a different bent,  
And soared from the prosaic earth

Upon the wings the Muses lent.

And first the Earl his goblet filled

With red blood from the Gascon vine,  
And some few drops propitious spilled

To great Agyieus and the Nine ;

Then smiling, cried, " Not unto me  
This cell, though bare, can barren be,  
When such as you around me sit  
To wreathe the time with flowers of wit.

Not only in these scenes we find  
A pleasure for the cultured mind,  
But converse with a friend can start  
The nobler feelings of the heart."

Then Hues : " Among those feelings, best  
In you is Charity exprest.

The patronage your bounty showers,  
My lord ! on merits mean as ours,  
Goes far beyond the world's, so slack  
To give, when getting nothing back."

“Nay !” cried the Earl ; “What search could fix  
In the account between us six  
The gain and loss ? What merit ought,  
My friends, on my side to be placed ?  
When in my cradle, knowing naught,  
Some fairy gifted me with taste.  
And as for wealth, I spend the store  
Which others heaped for me before.  
But say, could gold depress the scale  
Weighed 'gainst our Poets' latest tale ?  
Come, read or sing those strains of thine,  
That celebrate the birth of Wine.”

The poet answered to the call ;  
Broad-bodied, and of stature tall,  
He was. A mason in the days  
Of early youth, he lived to raise

His fame up, built upon the base  
Of a great mind. His comely face  
Had somewhat lost its power to please,  
Seared by inherited disease.  
Much had he written in manly strain,  
And graceful too ; and worked a brain  
Which Genius fired and Learning fed  
From its best stores—and thus he read.

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### THE BIRTH OF WINE.

In olden times ere men divined  
The use of wine, a King of Persia strained  
Some grape-juice into casks, which then consigned  
To a deep vault therein untouched remained.  
Time fled, and to a casual taste,  
Seeming unpleasant, with unreasoning haste  
He deemed it hurtful. Bottling some by way  
Of farther trial on a leisure day  
He left the bottles standing there,  
But labelled largely “ Poison ! ” and “ Beware ! ”

One of his wives one night—'tis strange  
How many wives those Persians could endure,  
And change their loves, and love to change—  
Racked by a headache, sought to cure  
Her pains by suicide. She flew  
To where a bottle stood, then drew  
The guardian plug, and quaffed  
In desperate haste the deleterious draught.  
It tasted well for poison, and made death  
More easy to be suffered. She felt how  
It heated her quick-coming breath,  
And flushed the marble of her brow,  
And poured confusion through her brain ;  
And standing there, with reeling voice  
And swimming eyes, she cried, " O blessed choice !  
This may be death, but is not pain ;  
Again to live were sweet, could I so die again ! "

Then sinking down, soft slumber o'er her crept ;  
Hours struck, and kept on striking—still she slept,  
And slept, and slept till daylight broke,  
And then she woke---

Woke with a start ; but ah ! what words can tell  
Her joy to know she lived, to feel that she was well.

Yet from that moment, more and more  
Her health required her watchful care ;  
And oft and oft she sought that secret store  
To find recovery there.  
'Twas sure to cure again what cured so well before.

This could not last : she could not taste  
And not consume. In sadness she surveyed  
The healing stuff, each visit that she paid,  
And saw it waste and waste.  
“ Ah me ! poor hopeless invalid ! ” she cried,  
Drank the last bottle's last sweet drop, and sighed.

In time th' indignant Persian found  
His precious juice was gone by stealth.  
Then came his wife, and showed him how her health  
Had been restored by means so sure yet mild ;  
And though the angry monarch frowned,  
The tender husband smiled.

Next did he order that new juice be poured  
Into new bottles ; thus the poisonous hoard,  
When the Shah called it “ wine,” became  
The fashion with its royal name ;

And patriot courtiers, rank impelling rank,  
Prest on to risk their lives, and nobly drank.

And all the Persian poets sang  
This great discovery's praise,  
The greatest one of ancient days ;  
And loud and wide the chorus rose and rang :  
" O Wine, sweet poison ! I would be  
In danger evermore from thee ;  
And if I die, and if I die,  
My unrepenting lips shall cry,  
' O Wine that killest ! thou dost give  
A pleasure greater than to live.' "

---

Cried Warner : " A most spirited tale,  
With a brave moral at the end ;  
Such preaching should not surely fail  
To win us. Here's your health, my friend !  
Those Persians sang before they died  
Like swans, but happier than the bird,  
They died to live again, and plied  
Their trade, and made their warblings heard."



“Nay,” cried the second poet, “nay,  
Some swans *do* sing, as travellers say.  
The ‘cygnus olor,’—let it come,  
And live with man, *that* strikes it dumb ;  
But wild and free it tunes its throat  
Unto a full articulate note,  
And mostly, when some wound distains  
Its plumage, pours lamenting strains.  
E’en Chinese geese by right enjoy  
The title of ‘sweet-voiced’ Lonskoi.”

Then Hariot : “Wonders will not cease  
While China boasts her singing geese.  
The dying swan seems musical,  
As making the best use of all  
The little life that’s left. But why  
Should not mankind, when called to die,  
Subside in a half-conscious swoon,  
And lose existence in a tune ?”

“Unlikely,” said the Earl, “I fear  
With men who have not voice or ear.  
But you infer, as I suppose,  
Whene’er man’s life on earth shall close,  
That he *has* lived it, nor lives on,  
No more immortal than the swan.”

“’Twould not be easy,” he replied,  
“To prove *them* living who have died.”

“But,” said the Earl, “may I be bold  
To beg the reasons for your creed?”

“Somewhat too long as well as old,”

He answered; “and which I indeed  
Should be the last to use, and so  
Head back enjoyment in its flow.  
Best deck with converse, wine and song  
The hours that will not last too long.  
But this much I may say: we see  
Death ruling universally,  
But not to sight or other sense,  
A single resurrection thence.”

“’Tis not,” the elder poet said,  
“ True that the harvest which Death gleams  
Ne’er springs up from its burial-bed.  
We oft *do* see a second birth  
By Nature granted when she means  
Such should be bodily and on earth.  
A *spirit* surely may exist,  
And not have power, howe’er it list,  
To print in gross material guise  
Its own fine self on mortal eyes.”

Cried Hues and Warner with one voice :  
“ We’ll wait then till it hath the choice.”

“ That,” said the poet, “ to my view  
Is a bad argument at best  
For heirs of Euclid, men like you,  
Whose proofs on unseen bases rest.  
If there be *one* great Soul before  
All time, there may be many more.

Now, what is space? Search, 'twill be found  
 Without beginning, end, or bound;  
 Still in itself a mere ideal,  
 And not a substance gross and real.  
 Yet to have been it hath possest—  
 Must have—a base on which to rest,  
 Eternal, infinite, and free  
 As was itself, and e'er shall be.  
 And what is this substratum?—What  
     But the great Soul, in its own right  
 Existing without cause, and not  
     Infinity, but Infinite!

“Or thus. You sages will allow  
 That something at the least is now;  
 And that, by all acknowledged laws,  
 That something had an earlier cause.  
 That cause had its own cause, and so,  
 Thinking and mounting as we go,

We reach the cause called Deity,  
Which never did begin to be ;  
Else, we concede a time in thought,  
When there was absolutely nought,  
And something made itself—and when  
It made it, there was nothing then !”

“ Ye gods !” cried Warner, “ what a stream  
Of metaphysics from the brain  
Of a rapt poet ! Yet I deem  
The lyre should sound a cheerier strain.  
It might, my friend, be over-bold  
To say your arguments are old ;  
But words, when so compactly prest,  
Will take some trouble to digest.  
If my lord wills, the leech’s craft  
Might help the process with a draft.”

The Earl smiled, passed the wine, and said :  
“ You see, my bard ! these three are led

To follow suit, and take the view  
Too many of their brethern do."

"This may be done," the bard replied,  
"By men whose intellectual store  
Is mathematics, and no more.  
*They* set all evidence aside  
Except their own. But if they rise  
To higher flight, and analyze  
The laws to which control is giv'n  
O'er things on earth, and things in heav'n,  
And strive to feel and count the links  
Of matter in its mighty chain ;  
Or stand, as 'twere, upon the brinks  
Of distant worlds with seeing brain,  
And spy their lineaments, and trace  
Their order and their march in space ;  
Then will they find that Truth may dwell  
Outside the camp they love too well."

Then said the Earl : “ Enough, my friend.  
Turn we the talk. ’Twere wise to blend  
Some lighter theme with the severe.  
Resume our last discussion here ;  
Or listen while our poet reads  
The noble strains wherein he pleads  
For his own art, and claims for *it*  
More wealth of wisdom and of wit  
Than Painter or Musician asks  
From Nature for their grateful tasks.”

The poet bent his weighty head  
In mute acknowledgment, and read :—

---

“ Rude and inflexible are the instruments  
By which the Painter and the man whose soul  
Is flooded with internal harmony,  
Strive to beget in other minds what theirs  
Conceive of Beauty. Beauty, in itself,  
Is but the progeny of mental moods,  
Which they, through process indirect, reveal  
By exhibition of material signs.

The Poet straightly bares his mind, that all  
 Who list may see it. Words are not to him  
 More than the chariot which conveys one friend  
 Into another's presence, whom he clasps,  
 Sees, hears, and talks with, face to face unveiled.  
 The other two are impotent to show  
 Motion of life or thought, or fall or change.  
 Cramped is the Painter's range ; one little space,  
 One point of time, expression one and fixed,  
 Bounds his dominion. Music to the soul  
 Hath but its passage through the ear, and thence  
 Issues in most sweet mutterings indistinct ;  
 The language of some hazy oracle  
 Which cannot be its own interpreter."

---

Cried Warner : " Pardon, if I check  
 The flow of so much eloquence  
 To say that rhyme would better deck  
 The naked thoughts, nor mar the sense.

" That," said the Earl, " we soon will test.  
 First, hear our Poet, and the rest



Of that which, warmed by genial fire,  
 He sings to celebrate his lyre ;  
 Next, how our second bard in rhyme  
 Hath clothed it : then will be the time  
 To pass your sentence, which is better,—  
 Verse rhyme-tied, or without the fetter.”

All giving their assent, again  
 The bard pursued his lofty strain.

---

“ Vast is the Poet’s range. Dumb matter speaks  
 With audible tongue when he doth question it.  
 He grasps the aëry motions of the mind,  
 The forms of thought, the heav’n-spun elements  
 Of right and wrong, and offers them to man  
 For liberal usage. Wisdom hence may swell  
 Her precious store, and virtue grow in faith  
 To see her features so divinely drawn.  
 He in an instant can o’erstep the world,  
 And fetch and set before our eyes at once  
 The frozen North and its humanity ;  
 Then waves his magic wand, and lo ! there troop

Upon the stage the swarthy sons of Ind.  
 He draws his fingers o'er the brow of youth,  
 And furrows it with age ; shows Passion fanned  
 To a small spark from the incipient gaze,  
 Until it looks itself into a flame,  
 Swelling to be the heart's incendiary.  
 He makes his home in space ; bids Nature fetch  
 His food from her illimitable fields ;  
 Wisdom and Wit are his soul's ministrants ;  
 All Life his company, and Time his slave."

---

Then, at the bidding of the Earl,  
 The second Poet rose,  
 And cried, " The setting of a pearl  
 Is all my task ; like those  
 Whose is the small but useful part  
 To frame some work of glorious art."  
 A young man, timid though sedate,  
 Small-faced, and neatly clad  
 He was, who did not overrate  
 The merit that he had ;

And with a blush upon his cheek,  
He read, in faltering tone,  
Like one whose roses were not blown,  
Whose name was yet to seek.

---

“ Up to the heav'n of high invention caught,  
The Poet works, divinely taught ;  
Dumb matter answereth him when he doth call.  
He grasps the fleeting forms of thought,  
The shades of right and wrong, and all  
That melts the heart or moves the mind,  
Then gives them to his kind  
For liberal usage. Wisdom hence may swell  
Her precious store, and Virtue wage  
A firmer fight with ill, as on his page  
She sees her features drawn so loveably and well.  
He, ere the moment flies,  
O'ersteps the world, and sets the frozen North  
Before our wondering eyes ;  
Then goes his edict forth,  
And on the quick-changed scene, dark-skinned  
And fickle-breasted troop the sons of Ind.

At his command, Youth, smiling now,  
Steps lightly on the stage ;  
He draws his fingers o'er its brow,  
And furrows it with instant age.  
Passion, first fanned to life, his pen portrays,  
Fanned by the primal gaze,  
Which looks and looks and looks again,  
Till the flame blinds the eyes, and spreads into the  
brain.

His home is universal space ;  
His food whatever Nature yields  
From her illimitable fields,  
And for his books he reads the human race.  
Bright-thoughted Wit, and Wisdom grave,  
Are his soul's ministrants, and Time his bounden slave."

Then Hariot cried : " For every man  
'Tis lawful—I in the same place  
Might do the same—to put his case  
As strongly as he can ;  
And our great Poet hath taken to-night  
A full advantage of his right.

As for the verse—to me the rhyme  
 Sounds pleasant, more than the mere time  
 Of naked metre ; and 'tis clear—  
 No slight point this—the general ear  
 Prefers the Poem that abounds  
 With music of according sounds.”

Then said the Earl : “ Both kinds possess  
 Their separate merits. Blank verse less  
 May check th' immediate rush of thought,  
 And is more like the common speech  
 Which men make use of, each to each.  
 Rhyme in its turn, besides being fraught  
 With music, may itself suggest,  
 By the necessities of its kind,  
 Ideas and notions to the mind,  
 Which else had slumbered unexpressed ———

Here, entering without word or knock,  
 The jailor broke the thread of talk.

He in part kindness came to ask  
If aught was wanted in the cell ;  
And partly to fulfil his task,  
Long-learnt, to spy if all was well.  
A man of fifty he—severe  
In aspect, and whose words were few ;  
Who felt small pity, and less fear,  
To his old hard vocation true ;  
Yet could be won to lenience more  
By the stout heart a prisoner bore  
Beneath his treatment proudly mute,  
Than offered gold or humble suit.

The Earl, when he had left them, cried,  
“ There’s something I would get  
From that man at all costs, which yet  
I know he ne’er will give.”  
“ And what is that ? ” his friends replied.  
Then he : “ There used to live

In this same Tower—perhaps the same  
    Bald dungeon-room—proscribed and bann'd,  
The wearer of my rank and name,  
    The eighth Earl of Northumberland.  
Much should I like to know whose hand  
Shot the three bullets through his breast  
When innocently laid in rest.  
The high Star Chamber Peers decreed  
That he himself had done the deed.”

“ Murder ! rank murder ! ” Hues exclaimed.  
“ Hush ! ” said the Earl ; “ I would not baulk  
    Your zeal, but such things should be named  
In whispers to well trusted ears.  
Perchance some Dionysius hears  
The thoughts that take the form of talk.”

“ Well,” answered Hues, “ for some short time—  
Too long indeed for such a crime—  
Power used the hands, and throats, and eyes  
Of letter-forgers, knaves, and spies,

To find if, haply, men might lean  
Tow'rd Mary, Scotland's French-bred Queen.  
And thus was Earl Northumberland  
Selected, watched, traduced, trepann'd.  
How did the charge against him square  
With his past life and deeds?—'tis there  
Truth should be sought for. He drove back  
The Scotch invaders from the bounds  
Of the East March, and on their track  
Pursuing, wasted their own grounds  
That side the border—bore away  
Men, horse, and cattle as his prey,  
And, ere returning as he came,  
Left sixteen towns to feed the flame.  
No love for Scotland here I ween,  
Whate'er his fondness for her Queen.  
There, too, the Earl did beard the French,  
And there compel them to retrench  
Our England's style and quarterings  
From the escutcheon of their kings.



A man like this, the more we make  
His doings and his nature known,  
Would seem more likely far to take  
The life of others than his own."

"True. Yet 'tis perilous to discuss  
The things, my friend, which happened thus,"  
Replied the Earl: "And so might I  
Demand in all humility,  
'Why am I here?'—I, too, who paid  
My moneys to hire ships, and keep  
The Spaniards off, and gave my aid  
To sink their vessels in the deep.  
Did I not, heart and voice, maintain  
Our reigning sovereign's right to reign?  
Yet am I charged with favouring  
The powder-plotting 'gainst the king,  
Because, though Protestant in creed,  
A cousin maybe sowed the seed

Of that disastrous crop." "For those,"  
 Cried Hues, "whose work is yet to do  
 'Twill be an animating view  
 To spy a prison at the close.  
 Yet should — how easier 'tis to win  
 The gifts of fortune than be just!—  
 Your Lordship *not* get out, we trust  
 That *we* shall ever more get in."

"I fancy," calmly the Earl said,  
 "I shall, when some few years have fled,  
 Escape from this; and, if so be,  
 For you the sole captivity  
 I will inflict will be to sit  
 Around my board, nor thence to flit—  
 At least with my leave giv'n—until  
 You've taken, each and all, your fill."

And the Earl *did* get out at last,  
 When fifteen Tower-spent years had past,

And fines and forfeits had made less  
His means to spend and power to bless.  
Yet did he richly pension all

Who came to share his prison hours ;  
And life, when sloping to its fall,  
Was free of tyrants and of towers.  
And what that life was may be drawn  
From all he penned in his defence,  
Ere in his prison-house the dawn  
Of Hope had broken to light him thence.

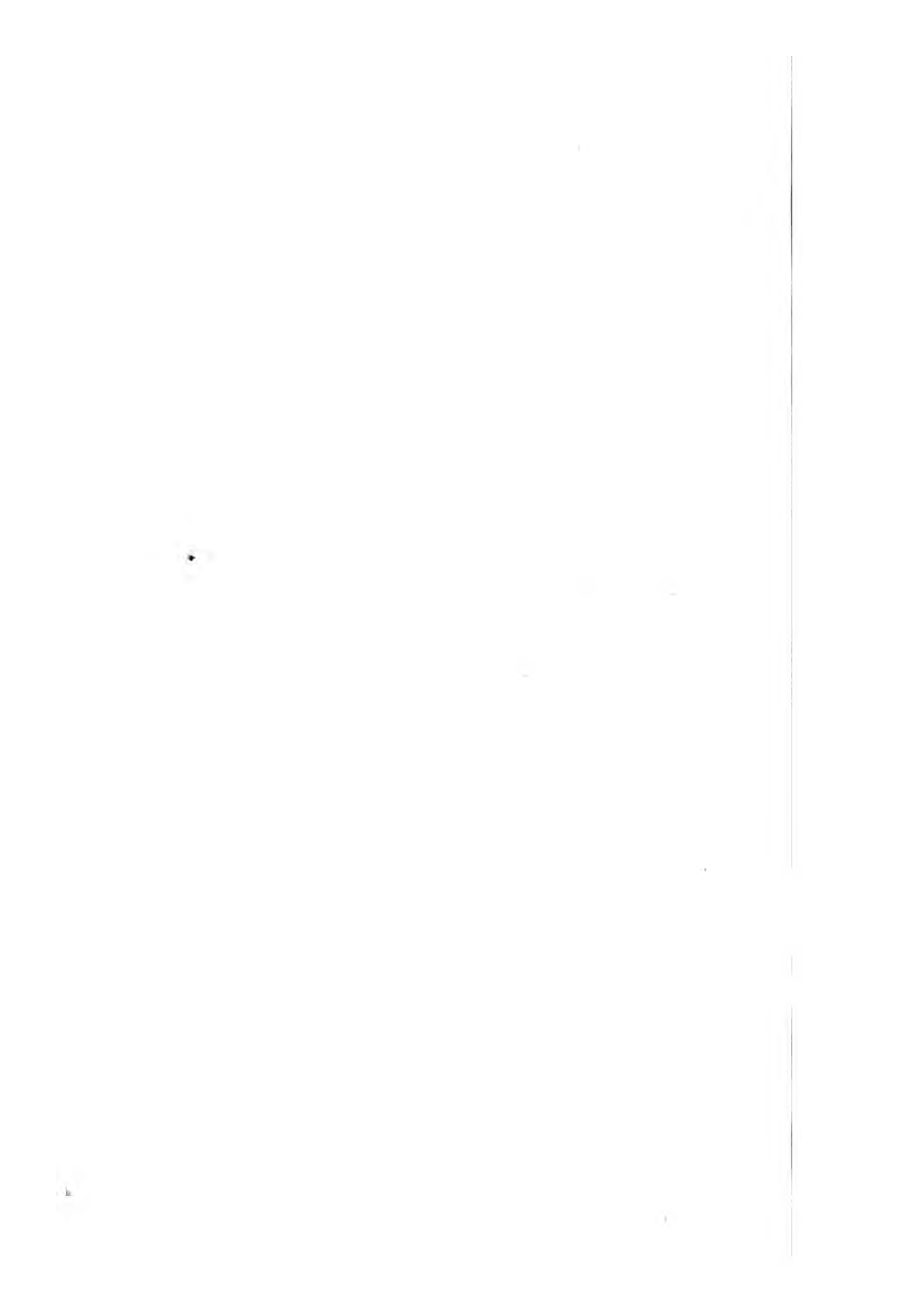
He wrote : “ An unambitious ease  
With me hath natural power to please ;  
This is my gift. Another man’s  
May be to guide the reeling State ;  
Or, in the war of partisans,  
To rule the tempest of debate.  
If I have won some little name  
By larger works of public good,  
’Twas Conscience called me, and I came ;  
’Twas duty—not my inborn mood.

'Mid gardens basking in the beam  
 Of summer sun, or in green nook  
 Reclined, and listening to the stream  
 Between the pauses of a book,  
 To pass the day, and when it ends  
 The converse of congenial friends ;  
 These were my joys. Where these abound  
 Safe resting on the lowly ground,  
 Why should I climb the hill whose tops  
 Are those from which ambition drops ;  
 Or, if it stands thereon like some,  
 Stands fearful of a fall to come ?

“ There's something, too, we draw from birth,  
 And from the genius of our sires.  
 One man is earthy, of the earth ;  
 One glows with old ancestral fires.  
 My fathers were good men and true.  
 I, their blood's heir, should be heir too  
 Of their ideas—not be the first  
 On the strange breast of Treason nurst.”

Great was the love the people bore  
The wizard Earl. When he was free  
From bondage, 'twas a sight to see  
Through London town the noble ride ;  
He rode amid the cannon's roar ;  
He rode 'mong clustering crowds that vied  
In shouting welcome. Hands exprest  
With proffer'd palm what filled each breast.  
Some revered the high-born Peer,  
Unto the mass the man was dear.

**SIR WALTER RALEIGH.**



## SIR WALTER RALEIGH.



OUTSPAKE the son of a king :

“ In sooth it is a graceless thing ;

None but my father could descend

To mew a bird like that in a cage.”

And worthily spake this princely friend

In the zeal of his uncorrupted age.

Yet such a deed was fitted too,

In a sort, for James the First to do ;

For the son was as little like the sire

As the smoke of a faggot is like its fire.



Come view what manner of man is he  
Who is hidden in stale captivity,  
And thence some knowledge may be got  
Of all that the royal churl is not.

And truly 'tis hard at times to give  
A reason for Heaven's rule on high.  
'Twas strange that James the sire should live,  
While Henry the son was first to die.

This prisoner is dark-haired and tall ;  
A many-gifted man, with all  
The potency of sword and pen,  
And glowing word, and ready deed ;  
A rarity of Nature's breed ;  
An intellectual king of men.  
Immured within this unjust cell,  
A Poet and Historian dwell ;  
A statesman, with a soldier's hand  
And leader's head, by sea and land ;

To learning and to science dear—  
And yet there is but one man here.

How largely in his fearless breast  
The spirit of adventure grew,  
And bid him muse and move, nor rest  
From searching earth for something new.  
How calmly could he turn and sit  
To stamp his thoughts so clear and grave ;  
Or blow the floating films of wit,  
Or strike the lyre Apollo gave.  
If, worthy of the world and him,  
An object promised golden fruit,  
No passion made his vision dim,  
No danger checked him in pursuit.  
Ah! what a cramped and cruel place  
For one who should be measuring space  
'Twixt North and South and East, to bring  
As tribute to his jealous king

All products that enrich or please,  
Or sweep his foes from off the seas.

So 'twas when the encircling main  
Was laden with the fleets of Spain,  
And Philip from the new world drew  
Its gold to arm his veteran hosts,  
And black towards our English coasts  
The storm-cloud of invasion flew,  
With thunder pregnant and with flame,  
Onward seven mighty squadrons came,  
And Parma joined the league of strife  
That aimed its blows at England's life.  
Among the crew sailed saintly men,  
With many a Pope-blest instrument  
To torture heretic limbs, and then  
Persuade their owners to repent—  
To do the body wrong, and make  
The mind think rightly for its sake.

Then Raleigh, in war council, spake

Brave words : " Ship, England, all thy guns,  
And for impassable ramparts take

The bodies of thy sons ! "

Then Drake and Hawkins rushed to fight.

" On ! " Frobisher and Howard cried ;

And held by day

Their murderous way,

And lit with cannon-lightnings wide

The horizon of the night.

And England's Genius took her stand,

Robed in a cloud of thunder, where

Cape Finisterre arose.

High towering through the murky air,

She shook the tempest from her hand

Upon her country's foes.

On by the storm-wind to their doom

The fleets of Spain were madly driven,  
While raged above, with flash and boom,

Th' artillery of heaven.

Upheaved, as by an earthquake's shock,  
On iron shore and jagged rock,

The mountainous armaments were flung,  
Or scattered o'er the boiling sea ;  
But on their rear unceasingly

Our ocean captains hung.

Like frightened doves, some vessels spread  
Their wings for Calais roads and fled ;  
But fled in vain, for day and night  
The wrath of England tracked their flight.

“ Behold, how we and this angry weather ! ”

Shouted brave Howard, “ by sure degrees,  
Little by little, and feather by feather,

Do pluck these vultures of the seas.”

For ships, like broken toys, were spread,  
Dislimbed, on the waves that rose in red ;  
And the channel was dotted with corpses, while  
The battle was fierce off Portland isle.

“ Ho ! ho ! Sidonia’s Duke ! ” cried Drake,—  
And his flushed crew laughed as the sailor spake,—  
“ Will wish himself and his men at ease  
At St. Marie, ’mong his orange-trees.”  
And Heaven, that smote with timely death  
The politic lord of Santa Cruz,  
Heard England’s prayers, as History saith,  
And slipt the storm to break and bruise  
On rock-bound islands of the West,  
And where the Orkneys stud the main,  
Torn into shreds, as a rotten vest,  
The scattered fleet of Spain.

But who to the great council-place  
Than Raleigh more of wisdom brought ;  
The light of beauty in his face,  
Veiled by the shades of thought ?  
Who more on bloody battle-ground  
Dealt latitude of death around ?

A man with rare-born power to weave  
The web of war with skilful hand,  
And who as soldier could achieve  
The action which the leader planned.  
With stronger arm or wiser brain  
Who fought the ambitious hopes of Spain,  
From when at first her king intrigued  
To aid rebellion's secret toil,  
And he with the eighth Gregory leagued  
To loose the war on Irish soil?  
Alas! that thence on Raleigh's head  
There lit the blow he scorned to fly,  
And left his traitorous king when dead  
Crowned with a shame that cannot die.

Subject and King! 'twere hard to find  
Two men so differing 'neath the test.  
How tortuous was th' oppressor's mind—  
How glorious that of the opprest!

He, with a singular excellence,  
    Could turn from council and from fight,  
To grow the hues and shapes and scents  
    That make the garden a delight ;  
To train with scientific care  
Fair things to grow more freshly fair ;  
And harmonize each new-made scene  
Of mountain-slope and level green,  
With all the bold effect surprise  
Works on the judgment through the eyes,  
And the fine skill that, tied to place  
And cramped in means, enlarges space.

Garden or field of conflict well  
    Would suit that spirit's various taste,  
But never this close prison-cell  
    Where unused genius runs to waste ;—  
Yet not to waste, if such the end  
    Of thoughtful nights and studious days,  
That for our human world he penned  
    Its history for the world to praise.



And he could see a higher Cause  
In the world's happenings swaying all ;  
The hand of one whom Christians call  
The Maker of their unkept laws.

Some thanks to prison-walls are due  
That let the active man review,  
And clothe in words and range in train  
The notions of his wondrous brain.  
But this, although enough to fix  
The wish of others, was not so  
For him ; and not enough to mix  
With those who, wont to come and go,  
'Twixt the grim Tower and noisy whirl  
Of outward life, to cheer it brought  
Their gems of wit and wealth of thought  
At summons from the wizard Earl.  
'Twas not enough to pass the night  
With Jonson in poetic flight,

Or torture Nature day by day  
By spell of chemical assay,  
To bring her secrets to the light.  
He hopes beyond ; and should he hope  
To win for life a freer scope  
And outward action, he must bring  
Before the avarice of his King  
Rich proofs of profit, and unfold  
The vision of Guiana's gold.  
Yet tales of treasure left behind  
But slightly moved the royal mind.  
Visions were pretty—James had heard  
Enough of these ; and something more  
Than faith was needed. He preferred  
The handling of the yellow ore.

Raleigh had sought across the main  
The famed Dorado of old Spain.  
On with his brave crew he sped,  
Searching at the fountain-head

For the one thing that, possess,  
Carries with it all the rest ;  
Where it hath its virgin birth  
In the womb-caves of old earth ;  
Or with dun dull lustre shines  
Surface-veined in easy mines,  
Waiting till dug out to be  
Whole fiend or half-deity,  
Changing, held, as they who hold,  
Are the slaves or lords of gold.  
Past the stormy ocean o'er,  
Landed on a hostile shore,  
On they went through foul and fair,  
Only the dark Indians there,  
With a natural worshipping,  
Said to Raleigh, " Be our King !"  
Up the Orinoco's stream,  
Under the sun's festering beam ;  
By the river's gloomy banks,  
Where the trees in towering ranks

Overarch the dangerous flow  
Of the cataracts below,  
Or where giant mountains rise  
Wooded to the burning skies.  
What though others failed who spent  
Life to win, yet on they went,  
Ever onward, though some few  
Stayed and slept, whom sickness slew.  
On through toil that turned to pain,  
Broken meal and steeping rain,  
While on all sides, front and back,  
Spanish hate hung on their track.

Yet was it of small use to beat  
Opposing fraud and foeman down,  
And with believing ears to greet  
The tale of Manoa's mighty town.  
So when bold Raleigh with his crew,  
Long absent, sought their native shore,  
Envy had worked too well to lower  
The worth of things she could not do.

And some men shook their heads, and made  
Remarks upon "th' adventurer's trade,"  
And "greed," and "travellers' tales," and how  
    " They 'd like to see what he had seen ;"  
And when the subject met his Queen,  
Displeasure roughed the regal brow.

How shall the favourite fallen regain  
    Th' imperial smile ? Leave England—close  
    In battle with the nation's foes—  
And once more crush the power of Spain.  
For Cadiz saw a new defeat  
Rend limb from limb her giant fleet,  
When, lighting the green sea for miles,  
The tall ships blazed as funeral piles,  
Or like burst fireworks rose on high  
In sparks and splinters to the sky.  
Flame-scorched, men leapt into the wave,  
Which changed the death, but failed to save ;

And many a wounded swimmer plied  
His stout arms 'mid the bloody tide,  
Till the shot thundered forth to tear  
His life out as he struggled there.  
Vere, Essex, Howard, as each one strained  
    To be the first in valour's race,  
    One ship was foremost in the chase ;  
For where the death-shower fiercest rained,  
Where most the cannon-lightnings ran  
    From fort to fort, and wreathed the shore  
    With sulphur clouds, the ' Warspite ' bore  
The might of Raleigh to the van.

And then this man, to show how great  
An item he of England's state,  
When filled with war, could turn and bend  
    His mind aside, and take delight  
In peaceful dittyng, or attend  
    Pure Science in her higher flight,  
Or thread the mazy path that lies  
Through metaphysic subtleties ;

Yet, at the same time, give wise heed  
How states are ruled and leagues are made,  
And with experienced vision read  
The riddles of the statesman's trade.  
These did he, not as one who sought  
To pass therein an unclaimed hour,  
But as he must whose various thought  
Is fresh with grace, or strong in power.

But Death hath now from England's throne  
Deposed the ancient lioness,  
And fortune set a man thereon,  
Who, than the rest of kings, hath less  
Of all in thought or act that suits  
The nature of the nobler brutes.  
Again must Raleigh hide his head  
In a Tower-dungeon—wherefore so?  
He sought for peace—peace! so 'twas said,  
With England's old and bitterest foe.

He deemed King James unfit to reign ;

Hence foreign league and trust betrayed—

But who the foe with whom 'twas made ?

O! shame on Cecil were it Spain.

This Spaniard with an English face--

What might not such a traitor dare ?

Empty a heav'n-blest throne, and place

Poor Arabella Stuart there !

Sentenced to death, yet left to live,

That he may daily die, and give

A tyrant's petty mind the bliss

Of troubling such a soul as this !

Then Raleigh wrote his faithful wife

(For love, forbidden, which could bless

With its plucked fruit his earlier life,

When lawful made was not made less) :

“ Read my last words—oh ! that my breath

Could fill thy ear therewith—yet keep

The love I send thee unto death.

Still would I not that thou shouldst weep—



Weep overmuch. For all the good  
Thou wouldst have had me do, my heart  
Is grateful, though my vagrant mood—  
Forgive me!—hath done only part.  
When I am gone, give, dearest, heed  
To fly from an inactive grief,  
For thou, to meet thy pressing need,  
Wilt find in labour a relief.  
Deserted by all friends, what friend  
To aid thee dare I recommend?  
So to God's love alone I must  
Entrust thee—He will keep the trust.  
I do not say unto thee try  
No second husband; he might be—  
How likely!—better far than I;  
But now thou art—soon wilt be—free;  
Use caution; riches thou hast got  
In thine own self; this truth I can  
Declare from knowledge—O! cast not  
That pearl before some swinish man.

I was denied thee living ; pray  
I may be given thee dead ; then keep  
These bones for burial far away  
In Sherborne<sup>”</sup> where my parents sleep.  
Farewell ! When earthly scenes shall close  
With all their joys, not over sweet,  
God grant, dear wife, that we may meet  
In others, and forgive my foes !”

Some sunshine lit at length the life  
Of his dull prison ; who can tell  
What bounty ’twas that let his wife  
Share half the tedium of his cell ?  
And if a son there born could prove  
The warmth of both the victims’ love,  
It showed, too, James’s lengthened sin  
In caging such a bird therein.  
But be the favour this, or some  
Of narrower or of wider kind,  
It is not fitting it should come  
Without a greater wrong behind,

So seize on Sherborne ; take his lands,

The fruit of pleasant toil, the pet  
Of leisure hours, and in the hands  
Of the foul-hearted Somerset

Place them ; there is no fear. Why care

For a mere prisoner or his heir ?

Despoil them both. And if he cry

For justice, let the king reply,

“ Enough to know my will, and bend

Thereto ; I want them for a friend.

That thou art yet alive on earth

Is payment greater than thy worth.

An old charge hangs above thy head,

Be silent lest thou snap the thread.”

But this wise monarch,—ah ! how wise

In Carr's disinterested eyes,—

Must have more gold, and whether got

By devil or saint, it matters not.

Then loose the victim's bonds ; again

Let Raleigh cross the western main,

Not freed by justice, but to bring  
The sacred metal to his king.  
Against the voyage craft and zeal,  
All weapons of the statesman's war,  
Are launched in vain by Gondomar,  
The supple Jesuit of Castile.

Closed the hateful prison-door ;  
Out upon the waves once more ;  
What a glorious power to please  
Have the freely-tumbling seas !  
Heaven will surely bless the ship  
Where no curse from human lip  
Mocks its power, and anthems rise  
To the storm-dispensing skies.  
Out again to that far land,  
Yellow with Pactolean sand ;  
Or where metal-laden rills  
Bubble down the giant hills.

On, with vision-prompted tread,  
Searching at the fountain-head  
For the one thing that, possest,  
Carries with it all the rest,  
Fated, as 'tis used, to be  
Whole fiend or half deity.  
Onward, to renew the strife  
Which wealth-seekers wage for life,  
Endless, day by day begun  
With fierce rain and steaming sun ;  
Hasty rest on fevered soil,  
Lessening hope and growing toil,  
Finishing as they began,  
With the rival hate of man.

The Indians bowed their heads again  
To Raleigh's natural majesty,  
But he, the king at home could lie  
To him, and keep the truth with Spain,

And with most pitiful treason show  
His secrets to their common foe.

Why further trace the victim's path,—  
Beset by Spain, betrayed by James,—  
And how his comrades, in their wrath  
Gave Santa Thomè to the flames ;  
How with a fruitless courage they  
Had skill to plot, and strength to slay,  
And left their leader's stricken son  
In payment of short battle won ?

Back, then, in England see him ; back,  
And charged with,—but what mattered then  
What was the charge ? There is no lack  
Of proof to damn successful men.  
Tried, and found wanting in the stuff  
By which his sovereign weighed his worth,  
Gold would, if only 'twere enough,  
Have covered all the sins of earth.

His child lost, sick, betrayed, and sold,—

Sold by an ignominious king

To his own kingdom's foe,—a thing

To weep for, and to wish untold.

This man, so charged, forbore to pull

The fruit he might have plucked in full ;

Thrust back the Tempter as he cried,

While holding forth the glittering lure,

“ Get gold,—try what the rest have tried ;

Or, fool ! be honest and be poor ! ”

He might have fled, but fled not ; chose,

As was his wont, to face his foes.

He leant on the king's justice,—poor

Was such a reed on which to lean,

For he, to make his victim sure,

Sent him false friends, whose courteous mien,

And offers of their aidance, must

Gain such a heart, to sell its trust.

Again, again in the Tower-jail

Behold him pent who loves not rest,  
Nor will his courtly jailor fail

To steal the secrets from his breast ;  
And send, for royal eyes to read,

The letters that he writes his wife :  
To slay at once were mercy—bleed  
The prisoner slowly out of life !

Enough ! the cruel drama draws  
To its last act. When kings make laws—  
Such kings as James—we may regret,

Not wonder that the blows are hard  
Which fear and hatred deal ; so let  
A scaffold rise in Palace-yard.

'Tis done. Bring Raleigh forth ! He stands  
Beside it with prayer-folded hands.  
Not long before his lips had prest  
Their last kiss on his wife's pale cheek.



No more he stands ornately drest,  
    But in plain mourning-suit, and meek  
And loving, one whose better mood  
Had thriven on sacramental food.  
A haggard beauty stamps his face,  
But on it there exists no trace  
Of trouble ; naught to mark the sense  
    Of the wrong done him, for he calls  
The world a larger prison, whence  
    Some hourly are ta'en out to die,  
    As he from his own narrower walls  
    This day, while others longer lie,  
Making but little difference.

“ Yet,” saith he, “ as I hope to turn  
    My Saviour's passion to my gain,  
Guiltless I die. I do not yearn  
    For life, but to wipe out a stain.

Wicked I have been, I avow,  
At courts, in camp, at sea ; this none  
Feels more than I,—yet have not done  
The thing for which I suffer now.  
God pardon—as I pardon—all  
My evil-doers, great or small.  
No longer shall ambition burn  
In me ; adventure charm my life  
No more, or love of child or wife  
Soothe me as once they did. I turn  
For ever from the crowded street,  
And greater joy of country fields,  
For still it was a sight more sweet  
Than all Guiana's mines to me,  
To tread the open land, and see  
The gold the yellow Ceres yields.  
Yes ; now from all I turn, as Time  
Shuts up the story of my days,  
To visions beyond thought sublime,  
And on that cross I fix my gaze,

Whereon, in ages long gone by  
My Saviour and my sins did die.  
Thrice-blest were he whom death should call  
From earthly throne and earthly care,  
To take, although the lowest there,  
A seat within heaven's bribeless hall."

Then, turning to the headsman, " Why  
Be careful that, when placed, my sight  
Be tow'rd the East? If hearts be right  
It matters not how heads may lie.  
This axe,—nay, suffer me—I like  
So sharp a cure for evil. Strike!  
Be quick! My ague-hour is near,  
And I may seem to shake from fear.  
Strike, man! Of what art *thou* afraid?"  
And with the word down flashed the blade,  
And the head fell; this, during life,  
She fondly kept who was his wife,

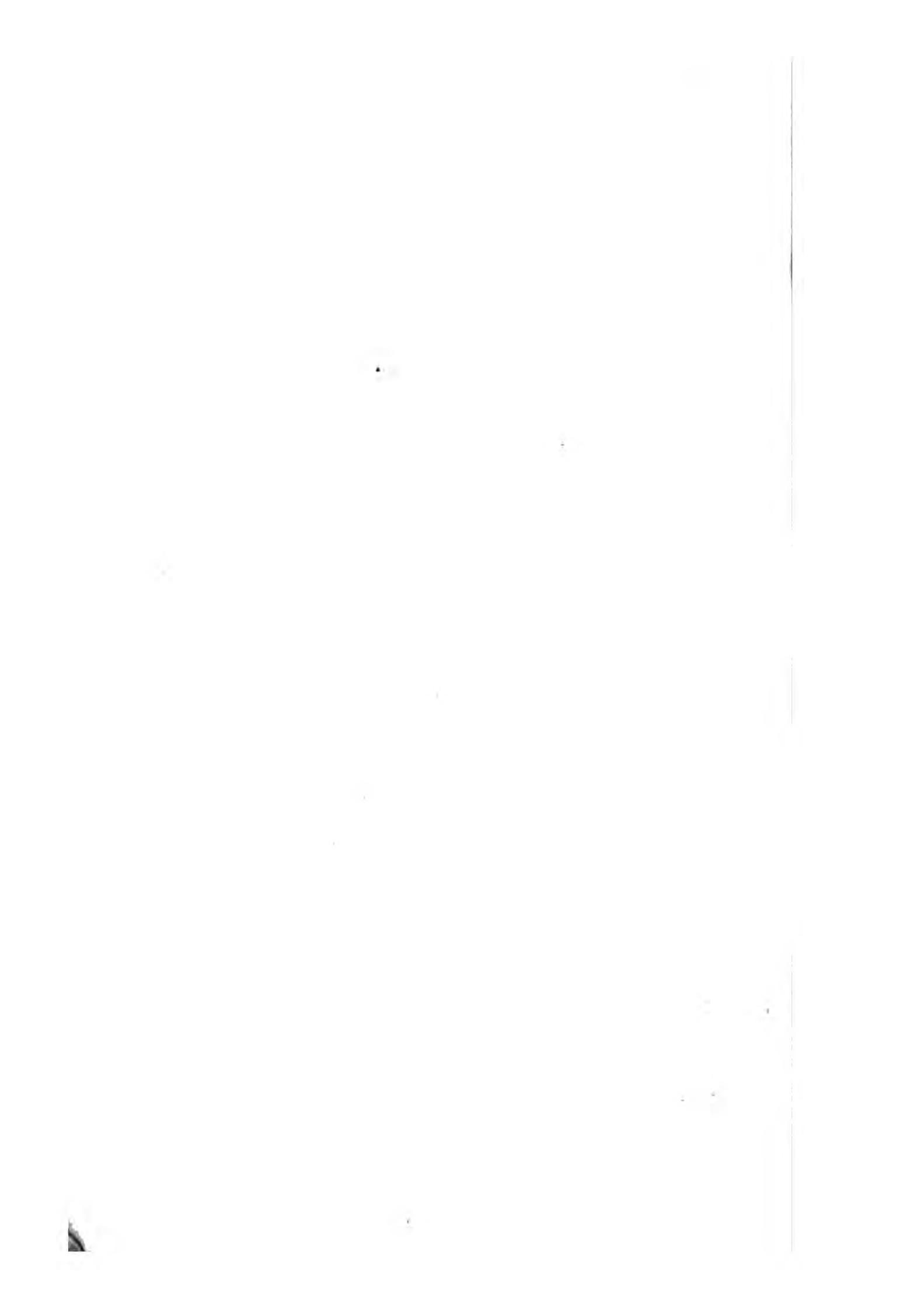
But left his country's heart to be  
The shrine that keeps his memory.

England forgets not him who claimed  
For his the universe of wit ;  
Who aimed at all things, and who hit  
The things at which his genius aimed.  
He tower'd o'er other men, who praised  
The prideless worth of one that raised  
Himself so high, yet not above  
The reach of his companions' love.

Raleigh and James ! 'Tis long long since  
Dead earth lies heavy on the two ;  
And of the subject and the prince,  
We, who are safe, may say what's true.  
Strange pity 'twas how power was then  
More able than in times more near  
To deaden hope, or raise a fear  
Within the breast of better men.

How many a moral we may draw  
From what our fathers bore or saw.  
Worth is eclipsed where tyrants shine,  
    So, 'tis a question grave,—  
If kings are made by right divine,  
    What is it makes a slave ?

WILLIAM MAXWELL, EARL OF  
NITHSDALE.



WILLIAM MAXWELL, EARL OF  
NITHSDALE.



THE Tower rose greyly in evening shade,  
And the dungeon grew more dim,  
Where Nithsdale sat, and counted the hours  
Of life yet left for him.

Sadly he thought of the brilliant past,  
In the colours of Hope arrayed,  
And then of the morrow's shouting crowd,  
And flash of the headsman's blade.



For he, though noble in heart and blood,  
A rebel had dared to be  
To the royal chief whom Englishmen  
Brought over the German sea.

His wife,—O why doth she linger yet ?  
The wonted hour is past :  
But, come she early, or come she late,  
He knows she will come at last.

Hark ! the door moves, and there she stands  
Scarce drest in her usual guise.  
Is the night air cold ? Or would she hide  
Her sorrow from curious eyes,

That over her head a greater fold  
Of clothing wraps her round,  
And that to her feet a longer length  
Sweeps on the dusty ground ?

Some friends of her own sex, too, she brought

To visit that fatal cell ;

But only a single friend at once

Might utter a last farewell ;

For they who ruled the land had said

That two at a time might see

And cheer the prisoner in his grief,

Though they were sad as he.

Yet was there such passing to and fro,

That hardly the guards could say

Who was it walked in, and who walked out,

Who stayed and who went away.

But they have gone ; ye might search the world,

Nor many such friends could find ;

With faltering steps they went, and left

The wife with her lord behind.

Oh! who, if he could, would dare describe  
That last sad interview,—  
The sighs and tears, and the broken speech,  
And the grief that grew and grew!

The kiss that is the last hath less  
Of sweetness than of pain;  
And words are bitter from the lips  
That never must speak again.

And still the jailor heard her voice  
As ever he passed the door;  
And each time that he passed it seemed  
That her words were more and more.

And the last, "My husband is my king!  
Would I, as a loyal wife,  
For all the wrong they have charged on thee  
Could answer, life for life!"

And then she past out from that room,  
While they who gazing stood  
Exclaimed, " 'Twas a shame a traitorous man  
Should have a wife so good."

Time fled, and the jailor sought the cell  
And cried, on entering there,  
" Late hours will give you an appetite,  
My lord, for our prison fare."

No voice in reply, no motion stirred ;  
And his eyes searched round and round,  
And he lighted a light, and searched again,  
But sought what he never found.

No living thing but himself was there,  
But before him, soiled and torn,  
There lay, as it were cast off in haste,  
The clothes that a man had worn.

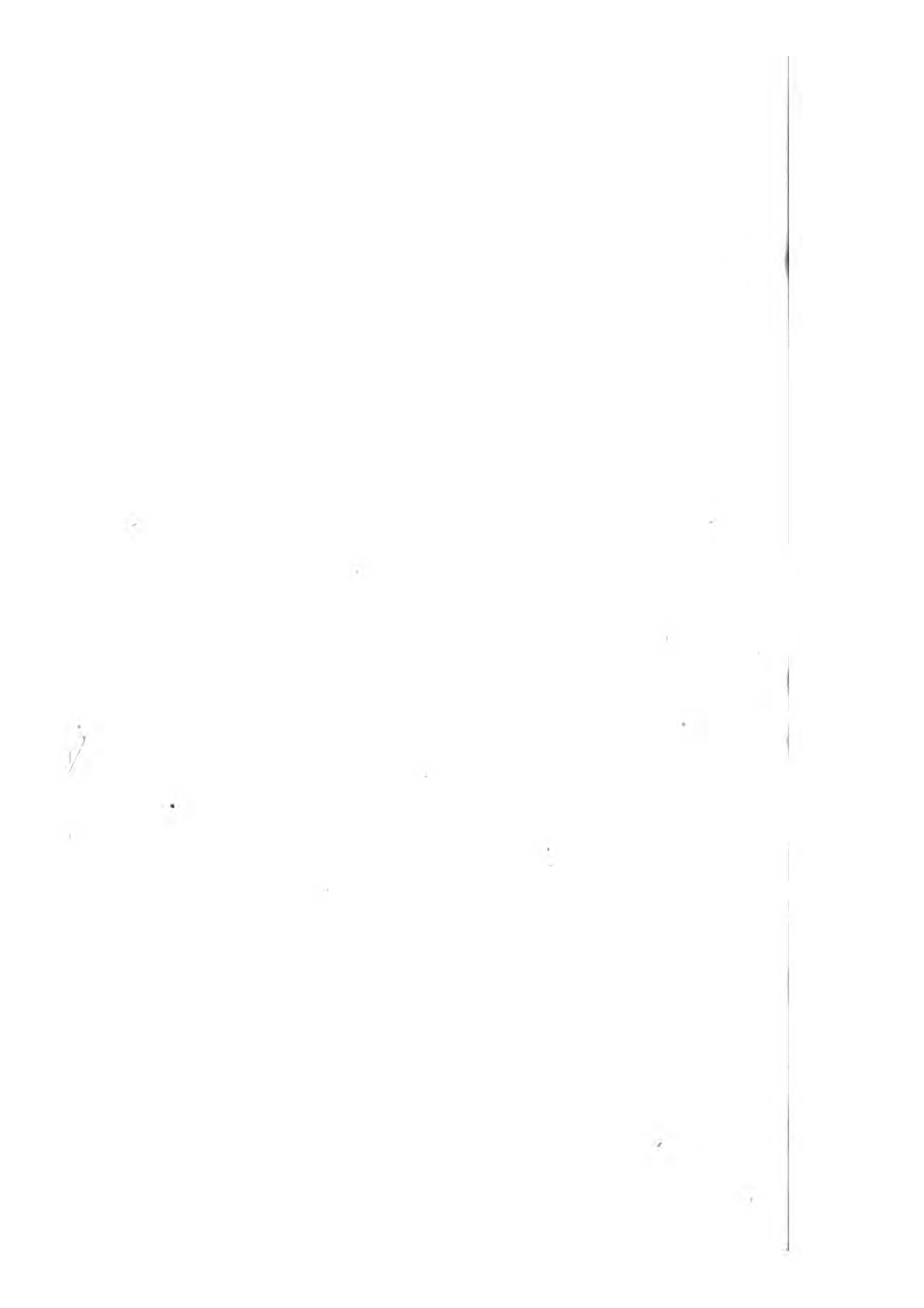
'Twas a near escape ; 'twas a woman's work ;

And the work was nobly done ;

For the wind blows fair for Calais roads,

And the race for life is won !

# THE THAMES.



## THE THAMES.

---

THROUGH many a land, from age to age, what  
mighty streams have rolled

By scenes of glorious deeds, or borne their argosies of  
gold.

Ilissus! Ganges! Nile! We glow at mention of each  
name,

Or of that vale where Tiber laves the sepulchre of  
Fame.

But for the spots which History loves, or nature makes  
divine,

No river unto English hearts flows half so dear as  
mine;



In my whole life from Trewsbury, my birthplace in  
the West,  
To where, like weary child, I sink on Ocean's mother  
breast.

Whether I run by regal town, or village green afar ;  
Glide by a poet's cot, or float the castle-ships of war ;  
Whether I make an angler's sport, or as a highway  
flow  
For a world-clasping trade, what stream a course like  
mine can show ?

I call up dreams of Godstow's nuns ; of learning and  
her bowers,  
As with a double name I run by Oxford's classic  
towers.

What thoughts to various memory dear the sight of  
Windsor brings,—  
The home of ancient chivalry, the burial-place of  
kings !

What man that hates a chain, and calls his freedom  
life indeed,

But burns within his soul to hear the sound of  
'Runnymede!'

Come further on with me and say what eye can coldly  
view

Hampton's long aisles, or Richmond's hill, or many-  
featured Kew.

Scant need to speak of all I pass of beauty and renown  
When, in my larger life, I sweep by London's giant  
town ;—

A world ashore, a world afloat ; the mart of wealth and  
worth,

The haunt of universal man, the centre-spot of earth !

Housed in a town of ships, what freight I bear upon  
my breast !

What mighty highways arch it, worn by feet that never  
rest !

By day and night I'm ploughed by keels, or lit by  
countless fires,

While o'er me floats the sound of bells swung from a  
thousand spires.

Close by that grey and gloomy Tower, I roll my  
sluggish flood :

To fit the spirit of the spot its stream should flow in  
blood,

For History fears to tell the tales of what she witness'd  
there,

Of all that's sad or bad in life,—its crimes and its  
despair.

My wave, that echoes oft with shouts from rivals in  
the race,

Becomes, in turn, some wretch's tomb—a refuge from  
disgrace,

When they, whom man hath cursed with blame, hope  
in my depths to find

A quick release from present care, whatever comes  
behind.

Away! where Greenwich rears her halls, or Science  
sheds her light

At Woolwich, teaching men to forge the lightnings of  
the fight.

Away! my billows higher rise; each bank becomes a  
shore

As in my flight I leave behind the light-ship of the  
Nore.

On, on; the two Reculvers past, my term of life draws  
nigh,

Before me spreads the ancient sea,—'tis glorious there  
to die;

Lost in the waters, o'er whose crests my country's  
vessels sweep,—

The delegates of air-born Jove, the thunderers of the  
deep!

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