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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK IN THE SADDLE: A COLLECTION OF POEMS ON HORSEBACK-RIDING ***

In the Saddle

A COLLECTION OF POEMS ON HORSEBACK-RIDING

"A good rider on a good horse is as much above himself and others as the world can make him"

Lord Herbert of Cherbury

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IN THE SADDLE.
DESCRIPTION OF A HORSE.

Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportioned steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed;
So did this horse excel a common one,
In shape, in courage, color, pace, and bone.

Round-hoofed, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have, he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back.

Venus and Adonis.

A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ANALOGY.

[Pg 2]

'Mid tangled forest and o'er grass plains wide,
By many a devious path and bridle-way,
Through the short brightness of an Indian day,
In middle winter 'twas my lot to ride,
Skirting the round-topped, pine-clad mountain side,
While far away upon the steely blue
Horizon, half concealèd, half in view,
Himalay's peaks upreared their snow-crowned pride,
In utter purity and vast repose.
I, ere the first faint flush of morning glowed
Within her eastern chamber, took the road,
And, slowly riding between day and night,
I marked how, through the wan, imperfect light,
Ghost-like and gray loomed the eternal snows.

So near they seemed, each crack and crevice small
Like bas-relief work showed, while in the light
Of ruddy morn, gray changed through pink to white.
But soon the sun, up-climbing, flooded all
The heavens, and then a thin and misty pall
Of exhalations rose, and pale of hue
And fainter ever those far summits grew,
Until the day waned low, and shadows tall
Sloped eastward. Then once more, in radiance clear,
Of setting sunlight, beautiful as brief,
Each peak and crag stood out in bold relief,
Till, slowly, pink faded to ghostly gray.
So through life's morning, noontide, evening, may
Ideal hopes dawn, fade, and reappear.

[Pg 3]

The Spectator.

ON HORSEBACK.

Hurrah! for a ride in the morning gray,
On the back of a bounding steed.
What pleasure to list how the wild winds play;
Hark! Hark! to their music,—away! away!
Gallop away with speed.
'Neath the leaf and the cloud in spring-time's pride
There is health in a morning's joyous ride.

And hurrah! for a ride in the sultry noon,
When the summer has mounted high,
'Neath the shady wood in the glowing June,
When the rivulet chanteth its lullaby tune
To the breeze as it wanders by,
Quietly down by the brooklet's side;—
Sweet is the summer's joyous ride.

And do you not love at evening's hour,

[Pg 4]

By the light of the sinking sun,
To wend your way o'er the widening moor,
Where the silvery mists their mystery pour,
While the stars come one by one?
Over the heath by the mountain's side,
Pensive and sweet is the evening's ride.

I tell thee, O stranger, that unto me
The plunge of a fiery steed
Is a noble thought,—to the brave and free
It is music, and breath, and majesty,—
'Tis the life of a noble deed;
And the heart and the mind are in spirit allied
In the charm of a morning's glorious ride.

Then hurrah! for the ring of the bridle rein,—
Away, brave horse, away!
The preacher or poet may chant their strain,
The bookman his wine of the past may drain,—
We bide not with them to-day;
And yet it is true, we may look with pride
On the mental spoils of a morning's ride.

E. Paxton Hood.

THE HORSEBACK RIDE.

When troubled in spirit, when weary of life,
When I faint 'neath its burdens, and shrink from its strife,
When its fruits, turned to ashes, are mocking my taste,
And its fairest scene seems but a desolate waste,
Then come ye not near me, my sad heart to cheer
With friendship's soft accents or sympathy's tear.
No pity I ask, and no counsel I need,
But bring me, oh, bring me my gallant young steed,
With his high archèd neck, and his nostril spread wide,
His eye full of fire, and his step full of pride!
As I spring to his back, as I seize the strong rein,
The strength to my spirit returneth again!
The bonds are all broken that fettered my mind,
And my cares borne away on the wings of the wind;
My pride lifts its head, for a season bowed down,
And the queen in my nature now puts on her crown!

[Pg 5]

Now we're off—like the winds to the plains whence they came;
And the rapture of motion is thrilling my frame!
On, on speeds my courser, scarce printing the sod,
Scarce crushing a daisy to mark where he trod!
On, on like a deer, when the hound's early bay
Awakes the wild echoes, away, and away!
Still faster, still farther, he leaps at my cheer,
Till the rush of the startled air whirs in my ear!
Now 'long a clear rivulet lieth his track,—
See his glancing hoofs tossing the white pebbles back!
Now a glen dark as midnight—what matter?—we'll down
Though shadows are round us, and rocks o'er us frown;
The thick branches shake as we're hurrying through,
And deck us with spangles of silvery dew!

[Pg 6]

What a wild thought of triumph, that this girlish hand
Such a steed in the might of his strength may command!
What a glorious creature! Ah! glance at him now,
As I check him a while on this green hillock's brow;
How he tosses his mane, with a shrill joyous neigh,
And paws the firm earth in his proud, stately play!
Hurrah! off again, dashing on as in ire,
Till the long, flinty pathway is flashing with fire!
Ho! a ditch!—Shall we pause? No; the bold leap we dare,
Like a swift-wingèd arrow we rush through the air!
Oh, not all the pleasures that poets may praise,
Not the 'wilderer waltz in the ball-room's blaze,
Nor the chivalrous joust, nor the daring race,

Nor the swift regatta, nor merry chase,
Nor the sail, high heaving waters o'er,
Nor the rural dance on the moonlight shore,
Can the wild and thrilling joy exceed
Of a fearless leap on a fiery steed!

Sara Jane Lippincott (Grace Greenwood).

AN EVENING RIDE.

[Pg 7]

FROM GLASHÜTTE TO MÜGELN IN SAXONY.

We ride and ride. High on the hills
The fir-trees stretch into the sky;
The birches, which the deep calm stills,
Quiver again as we speed by.

Beside the road a shallow stream
Goes leaping o'er its rocky bed:
Here lie the corn-fields with a gleam
Of daisies white and poppies red.

A faint star trembles in the west;
A fire-fly sparkles, fluttering bright
Against the mountain's sombre breast;
And yonder shines a village light.

Oh! could I creep into thine arms
Beloved! and upon thy face
Read the arrest of dire alarms
That press me close; from thy embrace

View the sweet earth as on we ride.
Alas! how vain our longings are!
Already night is spreading wide
Her sable wing, and thou art far.

Owen Innsly.

THE QUEEN'S RIDE.

[Pg 8]

AN INVITATION.

'Tis that fair time of year,
Lady mine,
When stately Guinevere,
In her sea-green robe and hood,
Went a-riding through the wood,
Lady mine.

And as the Queen did ride,
Lady mine,
Sir Launcelot at her side
Laughed and chatted, bending over,
Half her friend and all her lover,
Lady mine.

And as they rode along,
Lady mine,
The throstle gave them song,
And the buds peeped through the grass
To see youth and beauty pass,
Lady mine.

And on, through deathless time,
Lady mine,
These lovers in their prime,
(Two fairy ghosts together!)
Ride, with sea-green robe, and feather!

[Pg 9]

Lady mine.

And so we two will ride,
Lady mine,
At your pleasure, side by side,
Laugh and chat; I bending over,
Half your friend and all your lover!
Lady mine.

But if you like not this,
Lady mine,
And take my love amiss,
Then I'll ride unto the end,
Half your lover, all your friend!
Lady mine.

So, come which way you will,
Lady mine,
Vale, upland, plain, and hill
Wait your coming. For one day
Loose the bridle, and away!
Lady mine.

T. B. Aldrich.

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER.

I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

[Pg 10]

My mistress bent that brow of hers,
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance—Right!
The blood replenished me again:
My last thought was at least not vain.
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated,—who can tell?
Where had I been now if the worst befell?

[Pg 11]

And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
 As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought, All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty Done the Undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
 I hoped she would love me. Here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
 We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
 My riding is better, by their leave.

[Pg 12]

What does it all mean, poet? well,
Your brain's beat into rhythm—you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
 And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much—but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
 Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so you gave
A score of years to art, her slave,
And that's your Venus—whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
 You acquiesce and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
 I gave my youth—but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being; had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
 —Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest—
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
 Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

[Pg 13]

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be, that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower if first discerned,
 We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life forever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
 Ride, ride together, forever ride?

Robert Browning.

RIDING TOGETHER.

For many, many days together
The wind blew steady from the east;
For many days hot grew the weather,
About the time of our Lady's Feast.

For many days we rode together,
Yet met we neither friend nor foe;
Hotter and clearer grew the weather,
Steadily did the east-wind blow.

We saw the trees in the hot, bright weather,
Clear-cut, with shadows very black,
As freely we rode on together
With helms unlaced and bridles slack.

And often as we rode together,
We, looking down the green-banked stream,
Saw flowers in the sunny weather,
And saw the bubble-making bream.

And in the night lay down together,
And hung above our heads the rood,
Or watched night-long in the dewy weather,
The while the moon did watch the wood.

Our spears stood bright and thick together,
Straight out the banners streamed behind,
As we galloped on in the sunny weather,
With faces turned towards the wind.

Down sank our threescore spears together,
As thick we saw the pagans ride;
His eager face in the clear fresh weather
Shone out that last time by my side.

Up the sweep of the bridge we dashed together,
It rocked to the crash of the meeting spears;
Down rained the buds of the dear spring weather,
The elm-tree flowers fell like tears.

There, as we rolled and writhed together,
I threw my arms above my head,
For close by my side, in the lovely weather,
I saw him reel and fall back dead.

I and the slayer met together,
He waited the death-stroke there in his place,
With thoughts of death, in the lovely weather
Gapingly mazed at my maddened face.

Madly I fought as we fought together;
In vain: the little Christian band
The pagans drowned, as in stormy weather
The river drowns low-lying land.

They bound my blood-stained hands together,
They bound his corpse to nod by my side:
Then on we rode, in the bright March weather,
With clash of cymbals did we ride.

We ride no more, no more together;
My prison-bars are thick and strong,
I take no heed of any weather,
The sweet Saints grant I live not long.

William Morris.

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SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

 In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laughed between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gathered green
 From draughts of balmy air.

[Pg 16]

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheeled along,
Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong:
 By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode through the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
 She seemed a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
 And fleetly now she skimmed the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

[Pg 17]

As she fled fast through sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her played,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She looked so lovely, as she swayed
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

Alfred Tennyson.

THE KING OF DENMARK'S RIDE.

Word was brought to the Danish king,
 Hurry!
That the love of his heart lay suffering,
And pined for the comfort his voice would bring;
 O, ride as though you were flying!
Better he loves each golden curl
On the brow of that Scandinavian girl
Than his rich crown jewels of ruby and pearl;
 And his rose of the isles is dying!

Thirty nobles saddled with speed;
 Hurry!
Each one mounting a gallant steed
Which he kept for battle and days of need;
 O, ride as though you were flying!
Spurs were struck in the foaming flank;

[Pg 18]

Worn-out chargers staggered and sank;
Bridles were slackened, and girths were burst;
But ride as they would, the king rode first,
For his rose of the isles lay dying!

His nobles are beaten, one by one;
Hurry!
They have fainted, and faltered, and homeward gone;
His little fair page now follows alone,
For strength and for courage trying!
The king looked back at that faithful child;
Wan was the face that answering smiled;
They passed the drawbridge with clattering din,
Then he dropped; and only the king rode in
Where his rose of the isles lay dying!

The king blew a blast on his bugle-horn;
Silence!
No answer came; but faint and forlorn
An echo returned on the cold gray morn,
Like the breath of a spirit sighing.
The castle portal stood grimly wide;
None welcomed the king from that weary ride;
For dead, in the light of the dawning day,
The pale sweet form of the welcomer lay,
Who had yearned for his voice while dying!

The panting steed, with a drooping crest,
Stood weary.
The king returned from her chamber of rest,
The thick sobs choking in his breast;
And, that dumb companion eying,
The tears gushed forth which he strove to check;
He bowed his head on his charger's neck;
"O steed, that every nerve didst strain,
Dear steed, our ride hath been in vain
To the halls where my love lay dying!"

Hon. Caroline Norton.

[Pg 19]

RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.

Broad the forests stood (I read) on the hills of Linteged—
Toll slowly.
And three hundred years had stood mute adown each hoary wood,
Like a full heart having prayed.

And the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly.
And but little thought was theirs of the silent antique years,
In the building of their nest.

Down the sun dropt large and red, on the towers of Linteged,—
Toll slowly.
Lance and spear upon the height, bristling strange in fiery light,
While the castle stood in shade.

There, the castle stood up black, with the red sun at its back,—
Toll slowly.
Like a sullen smouldering pyre, with a top that flickers fire,
When the wind is on its track.

And five hundred archers tall did besiege the castle wall,—
Toll slowly.
And the castle seethed in blood, fourteen days and nights had stood,
And to-night, was near its fall.

Yet thereunto, blind to doom, three months since, a bride did come,—
Toll slowly.
One who proudly trod the floors, and softly whispered in the doors,
"May good angels bless our home."

Oh, a bride of queenly eyes, with a front of constancies,—

[Pg 20]

Toll slowly.
Oh, a bride of cordial mouth,—where the untired smile of youth
Did light outward its own sighs.

'Twas a Duke's fair orphan-girl, and her uncle's ward, the Earl,
Toll slowly.
Who betrothed her, twelve years old, for the sake of dowry gold,
To his son Lord Leigh, the churl.

[Pg 21]

But what time she had made good all her years of womanhood,
Toll slowly.
Unto both those Lords of Leigh, spake she out right sovrانly,
"My will runneth as my blood.

"And while this same blood makes red this same right hand's veins," she said,
—

Toll slowly.
"'Tis my will as lady free, not to wed a Lord of Leigh,
But Sir Guy of Linteged."

The old Earl he smiled smooth, then he sighed for willful youth,—
Toll slowly.
"Good my niece, that hand withal looketh somewhat soft and small
For so large a will, in sooth."

She, too, smiled by that same sign,—but her smile was cold and fine,—
Toll slowly.
"Little hand clasps muckle gold, or it were not worth the hold
Of thy son, good uncle mine!"

[Pg 22]

Then the young lord jerked his breath, and sware thickly in his teeth,—
Toll slowly.
"He would wed his own betrothed, an she loved him an she loathed,
Let the life come or the death."

Up she rose with scornful eyes, as her father's child might rise,—
Toll slowly.
"Thy hound's blood, my Lord of Leigh, stains thy knightly heel," quoth she,
"And he moans not where he lies.

"But a woman's will dies hard, in the hall or on the sward!"—
Toll slowly.
"By that grave, my lords, which made me orphaned girl and dowered lady,
I deny you wife and ward."

Unto each she bowed her head, and swept past with lofty tread.
Toll slowly.
Ere the midnight-bell had ceased, in the chapel had the priest
Blessed her, bride of Linteged.

Fast and fain the bridal train along the night-storm rode amain:—
Toll slowly.
Hard the steeds of lord and serf struck their hoofs out on the turf,
In the pauses of the rain.

[Pg 23]

Fast and fain the kinsmen's train along the storm pursued amain—
Toll slowly.
Steed on steed-track, dashing off—thickening, doubling, hoof on hoof,
In the pauses of the rain.

And the bridegroom led the flight on his red-roan steed of might,—
Toll slowly.
And the bride lay on his arm, still, as if she feared no harm,
Smiling out into the night.

"Dost thou fear?" he said at last;—"Nay!" she answered him in haste,—
Toll slowly.
"Not such death as we could find—only life with one behind—
Ride on fast as fear—ride fast!"

Up the mountain wheeled the steed—girth to ground, and fetlocks spread,—
Toll slowly.
Headlong bounds, and rocking flanks,—down he staggered—down the banks,
To the towers of Linteged.

[Pg 24]

High and low the serfs looked out, red the flambeaus tossed about,—
Toll slowly.

In the courtyard rose the cry—"Live the Duchess and Sir Guy!"
But she never heard them shout.

On the steed she dropt her cheek, kissed his mane and kissed his neck,—
Toll slowly.

"I had happier died by thee, than lived on a Lady Leigh,"
Were the first words she did speak.

But a three months' joyaunce lay 'twixt that moment and to-day,—
Toll slowly.

When five hundred archers tall stand beside the castle wall,
To recapture Duchess May.

And the castle standeth black, with the red sun at its back,—
Toll slowly.

And a fortnight's siege is done—and, except the Duchess, none
Can misdoubt the coming wrack.

........*....*

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,—
Toll slowly.

On the tower the castle's lord leant in silence on his sword,
With an anguish in his breast.

With a spirit-laden weight, did he lean down passionate.—
Toll slowly.

They have almost sapped the wall,—they will enter therewithal,
With no knocking at the gate.

Then the sword he leant upon, shivered—snapped upon the stone,—
Toll slowly.

"Sword," he thought, with inward laugh, "ill thou servest for a staff
When thy nobler use is done!

"Sword, thy nobler use is done!—tower is lost, and shame begun"—
Toll slowly.

"If we met them in the breach, hilt to hilt or speech to speech,
We should die there, each for one.

"If we met them at the wall, we should singly, vainly fall,"—
Toll slowly.

"But if *I* die here alone,—then I die, who am but one,
And die nobly for them all.

"Five true friends lie for my sake,—in the moat and in the brake,"—
Toll slowly.

"Thirteen warriors lie at rest, with a black wound in the breast,
And not one of these will wake.

"And no more of this shall be!—heart-blood weighs too heavily,"—
Toll slowly.

"And I could not sleep in grave, with the faithful and the brave
Heaped around and over me.

"Since young Clare a mother hath, and young Ralph a plighted faith,"—
Toll slowly.

"Since my pale young sister's cheeks blush like rose when Ronald speaks,
Albeit never a word she saith—

"These shall never die for me—life-blood falls too heavily."—
Toll slowly.

"And if *I* die here apart,—o'er my dead and silent heart
They shall pass out safe and free.

"When the foe hath heard it said—'Death holds Guy of Linteged,'"—
Toll slowly.

"That new corse new peace shall bring, and a blessed, blessed thing
Shall the stone be at its head.

"Then my friends shall pass out free, and shall bear my memory,"—
Toll slowly.

"Then my foes shall sleek their pride, soothing fair my widowed bride
Whose sole sin was love of me.

"With their words all smooth and sweet, they will front her and entreat,"—
Toll slowly.

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"And their purple pall will spread underneath her fainting head
While her tears drop over it.

"She will weep her woman's tears, she will pray her woman's prayers,"—
Toll slowly.

"But her heart is young in pain, and her hopes will spring again
By the suntime of her years.

"Ah, sweet May—ah, sweetest grief!—once I vowed thee my belief,"—
Toll slowly.

"That thy name expressed thy sweetness,—May of poets, in completeness!
Now my May-day seemeth brief."

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All these silent thoughts did swim o'er his eyes grown strange and dim,—
Toll slowly.

Till his true men in the place wished they stood there face to face
With the foe instead of him.

"One last oath, my friends that wear faithful hearts to do and dare!"
Toll slowly.

"Tower must fall, and bride be lost!—swear me service worth the cost!"
—Bold they stood around to swear.

"Each man clasp my hand and swear, by the deed we failed in there,"—
Toll slowly.

"Not for vengeance, not for right, will ye strike one blow to-night!"—
Pale they stood around—to swear.

"One last boon, young Ralph and Clare! faithful hearts to do and dare!"—
Toll slowly.

"Bring that steed up from his stall, which she kissed before you all,—
Guide him up the turret-stair.

"Ye shall harness him aright, and lead upward to this height!"—
Toll slowly.

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"Once in love and twice in war, hath he borne me strong and far,
He shall bear me far to-night."

Then his men looked to and fro, when they heard him speaking so.—
Toll slowly.

—"Las! the noble heart," they thought,—"he in sooth is grief-distraught.
Would, we stood here with the foe!"

But a fire flashed from his eye, 'twixt their thought and their reply,—
Toll slowly.

"Have ye so much time to waste? We who ride here, must ride fast,
As we wish our foes to fly."

They have fetched the steed with care, in the harness he did wear,—
Toll slowly.

Past the court and through the doors, across the rushes of the floors,
But they goad him up the stair.

Then from out her bower chambère, did the Duchess May repair.—
Toll slowly.

"Tell me now what is your need," said the lady, "of this steed,
That ye goad him up the stair?"

[Pg 30]

Calm she stood; unbodkined through, fell her dark hair to her shoe,—
Toll slowly.

And the smile upon her face, ere she left the tiring-glass,
Had not time enough to go.

"Get thee back, sweet Duchess May! hope is gone like yesterday,"—
Toll slowly.

"One half-hour completes the breach; and thy lord grows wild of speech,—
Get thee in, sweet lady, and pray.

"In the east tower, high'st of all,—loud he cries for steed from stall."—
Toll slowly.

"He would ride as far," quoth he, "as for love and victory,
Though he rides the castle-wall.

"And we fetch the steed from stall, up where never a hoof did fall."—
Toll slowly.

"Wifely prayer meets deathly need! may the sweet Heavens hear thee plead
If he rides the castle-wall."

Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair coiled on the floor,—

Toll slowly.

And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any word
Which you might be listening for.

[Pg 31]

"Get thee in, thou soft ladye!—here, is never a place for thee!"—

Toll slowly.

"Braid thine hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty in its moan
May find grace with Leigh of Leigh."

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady face,

Toll slowly.

Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering, seems to look
Right against the thunder-place.

And her foot trod in, with pride, her own tears i' the stone beside,—

Toll slowly.

"Go to, faithful friends, go to!—Judge no more what ladies do,—
No, nor how their lords may ride!"

Then the good steed's rein she took, and his neck did kiss and stroke:—

Toll slowly.

Soft he neighed to answer her, and then followed up the stair,
For the love of her sweet look.

[Pg 32]

Oh, and steeply, steeply wound up the narrow stair around,—

Toll slowly.

Oh, and closely, closely speeding, step by step beside her treading,—
Did he follow, meek as hound.

On the east tower, high'st of all,—there, where never a hoof did fall,—

Toll slowly.

Out they swept, a vision steady,—noble steed and lovely lady,
Calm as if in bower or stall.

Down she knelt at her lord's knee, and she looked up silently,—

Toll slowly.

And he kissed her twice and thrice, for that look within her eyes
Which he could not bear to see.

Quoth he, "Get thee from this strife,—and the sweet saints bless thy life!"—

Toll slowly.

"In this hour, I stand in need of my noble red-roan steed—
But no more of my noble wife."

Quoth she, "Meekly have I done all thy biddings under sun:"—

Toll slowly.

"But by all my womanhood, which is proved so true and good,
I will never do this one.

[Pg 33]

"Now by womanhood's degree, and by wifhood's verity,"—

Toll slowly.

"In this hour if thou hast need of thy noble red-roan steed,
Thou hast also need of *me*.

"By this golden ring ye see on this lifted hand pardiè,"—

Toll slowly.

"If, this hour, on castle-wall, can be room for steed from stall,
Shall be also room for *me*.

"So the sweet saints with me be" (did she utter solemnly),—

Toll slowly.

"If a man, this eventide, on this castle wall will ride,
He shall ride the same with *me*."

Oh, he sprang up in the selle, and he laughed out bitter-well,—

Toll slowly.

"Wouldst thou ride among the leaves, as we used on other eves,
To hear chime a vesper-bell?"

[Pg 34]

She clang closer to his knee—"Ay, beneath the cypress-tree!"—

Toll slowly.

"Mock me not, for otherwhere than along the greenwood fair,
Have I ridden fast with thee!

"Fast I rode with new-made vows, from my angry kinsman's house!"

Toll slowly.

"What! and would you men should reck that I dared more for love's sake
As a bride than as a spouse?

"What, and would you it should fall, as a proverb, before all,"—
Toll slowly.

"That a bride may keep your side while through castle-gate you ride,
Yet eschew the castle-wall?"

Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing,—
Toll slowly.

With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in—
Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain, but the small hands closed again,—
Toll slowly.

Back he reined the steed—back, back! but she trailed along his track
With a frantic clasp and strain.

[Pg 35]

Evermore the foemen pour through the crash of window and door,—
Toll slowly.

And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks of "kill!" and "flee!"
Strike up clear amid the roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain,—but they closed and clung again,—
Toll slowly.

Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,
In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute,—with her shuddering lips half-shut,—
Toll slowly.

Her head fallen as half in swoond,—hair and knee swept on the ground,—
She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed back-thrown on the slippery coping-stone,—
Toll slowly.

Back the iron hoofs did grind on the battlement behind,
Whence a hundred feet went down.

[Pg 36]

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode,
Toll slowly.

"Friends, and brothers! save my wife!—Pardon, sweet, in change for life,—
But I ride alone to God."

Straight as if the Holy name had upbreathed her like a flame,—
Toll slowly.

She upsprang, she rose upright,—in his selle she sate in sight,
By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest,—
Toll slowly.

"Ring," she cried, "O vesper-bell, in the beechwood's old chapelle!
But the passing-bell rings best."

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose—in vain,—
Toll slowly.

For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in air,
On the last verge rears amain.

Now he hangs, the rocks between—and his nostrils curdle in,—
Toll slowly.

Now he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of foam fall off;
And his face grows fierce and thin!

[Pg 37]

And a look of human woe from his staring eyes did go,—
Toll slowly.

And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony
Of the headlong death below,—

And, "Ring, ring, thou passing-bell," still she cried, "i' the old chapelle!"—
Toll slowly.

Then back-toppling, crashing back,—a dead weight flung out to wrack,
Horse and riders overfell.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

IRMINGARD'S ESCAPE.

I am the Lady Irmingard,
Born of a noble race and name!
Many a wandering Suabian bard,
Whose life was dreary and bleak and hard,
Has found through me the way to fame.
Brief and bright were those days, and the night
Which followed was full of a lurid light.
Love, that of every woman's heart
Will have the whole, and not a part,
That is to her, in Nature's plan,
More than ambition is to man,
Her light, her life, her very breath,
With no alternative but death,
Found me a maiden soft and young,
Just from the convent's cloistered school,
And seated on my lowly stool,
Attentive while the minstrels sung.

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Gallant, graceful, gentle, tall,
Fairest, noblest, best of all,
Was Walter of the Vogelweid;
And, whatsoever may betide,
Still I think of him with pride!
His song was of the summer-time,
The very birds sang in his rhyme;
The sunshine, the delicious air,
The fragrance of the flowers, were there;
And I grew restless as I heard,
Restless and buoyant as a bird,
Down soft, aerial currents sailing,
O'er blossomed orchards, and fields in bloom,
And through the momentary gloom
Of shadows o'er the landscape trailing,
Yielding and borne I knew not where,
But feeling resistance unavailing.

And thus, unnoticed and apart,
And more by accident than choice,
I listened to that single voice
Until the chambers of my heart
Were filled with it by night and day.
One night—it was a night in May,—
Within the garden, unawares,
Under the blossoms in the gloom,
I heard it utter my own name
With protestations and wild prayers;
And it rang through me, and became
Like the archangel's trump of doom,
Which the soul hears, and must obey;
And mine arose as from a tomb.
My former life now seemed to me
Such as hereafter death may be,
When in the great Eternity
We shall awake and find it day.

[Pg 39]

It was a dream, and would not stay;
A dream, that in a single night
Faded and vanished out of sight.
My father's anger followed fast
This passion, as a freshening blast
Seeks out and fans the fire, whose rage
It may increase, but not assuage.
And he exclaimed: "No wandering bard
Shall win thy hand, O Irmingard!
For which Prince Henry of Hoheneck
By messenger and letter sues."

Gently, but firmly, I replied:
"Henry of Hoheneck I discard!
Never the hand of Irmingard
Shall lie in his as the hand of a bride!"
This said I, Walter, for thy sake;
This said I, for I could not choose.

After a pause, my father spake
In that cold and deliberate tone
Which turns the hearer into stone,
And seems itself the act to be
That follows with such dread certainty;
"This, or the cloister and the veil!"
No other words than these he said,
But they were like a funeral wail;
My life was ended, my heart was dead.

[Pg 40]

That night from the castle-gate went down,
With silent, slow, and stealthy pace,
Two shadows, mounted on shadowy steeds,
Taking the narrow path that leads
Into the forest dense and brown.
In the leafy darkness of the place,
One could not distinguish form nor face,
Only a bulk without a shape,
A darker shadow in the shade;
One scarce could say it moved or stayed.
Thus it was we made our escape!
A foaming brook, with many a bound,
Followed us like a playful hound;
Then leaped before us, and in the hollow
Paused, and waited for us to follow,
And seemed impatient, and afraid
That our tardy flight should be betrayed
By the sound our horses' hoof-beats made.
And when we reached the plain below,
We paused a moment and drew rein
To look back at the castle again;
And we saw the windows all aglow
With lights, that were passing to and fro;
Our hearts with terror ceased to beat;
The brook crept silent to our feet;
We knew what most we feared to know.

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Then suddenly horns began to blow;
And we heard a shout, and a heavy tramp,
And our horses snorted in the damp
Night-air of the meadows green and wide,
And in a moment, side by side,
So close, they must have seemed but one,
The shadows across the moonlight run,
And another came, and swept behind,
Like the shadow of clouds before the wind!

How I remember that breathless flight
Across the moors, in the summer night!
How under our feet the long, white road
Backward like a river flowed,
Sweeping with it fences and hedges,
Whilst farther away, and overhead,
Paler than I, with fear and dread,
The moon fled with us, as we fled
Along the forest's jagged edges!

All this I can remember well;
But of what afterwards befell
I nothing further can recall
Than a blind, desperate, headlong fall;
The rest is a blank and darkness all.
When I awoke out of this swoon,
The sun was shining, not the moon,
Making a cross upon the wall
With the bars of my windows narrow and tall;
And I prayed to it, as I had been wont to pray,
From early childhood, day by day,
Each morning, as in bed I lay!
I was lying again in my own room!
And I thanked God, in my fever and pain,
That those shadows on the midnight plain
Were gone, and could not come again!
I struggled no longer with my doom!

[Pg 42]

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

From heavy dreams fair Helen rose,
And eyed the dawning red:
"Alas, my love, thou tarriest long!
O art thou false or dead?"—

With gallant Fred'rick's princely power
He sought the bold Crusade;
But not a word from Judah's wars
Told Helen how he sped.

With Paynim and with Saracen
At length a truce was made,
And every knight returned to dry
The tears his love had shed.

Our gallant host was homeward bound
With many a song of joy;
Green waved the laurel in each plume,
The badge of victory.

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And old and young, and sire and son,
To meet them crowd the way,
With shouts and mirth and melody,
The debt of love to pay.

Full many a maid her true-love met,
And sobbed in his embrace,
And fluttering joy in tears and smiles
Arrayed full many a face.

Nor joy nor smile for Helen sad;
She sought the host in vain;
For none could tell her William's fate,
If faithless, or if slain.

The martial band is past and gone;
She rends her raven hair,
And in distraction's bitter mood
She weeps with wild despair.

"O rise, my child," her mother said,
"Nor sorrow thus in vain;
A perjured lover's fleeting heart
No tears recall again."—

"O mother, what is gone, is gone,
What's lost forever lorn;
Death, death alone can comfort me;
O had I ne'er been born!

"O break, my heart,—O break at once!
Drink my life-blood, Despair!
No joy remains on earth for me,
For me in heaven no share."—

[Pg 44]

"O enter not in judgment, Lord!"
The pious mother prays;
"Impute not guilt to thy frail child!
She knows not what she says.

"O say thy pater noster, child!
O turn to God and grace!
His will, that turned thy bliss to bale,
Can change thy bale to bliss."—

"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is bale?
My William's love was heaven on earth,
Without it earth is hell.

"Why should I pray to ruthless Heaven,
Since my loved William's slain?
I only prayed for William's sake,
And all my prayers were vain."—

"O take the sacrament, my child,
And check these tears that flow;
By resignation's humble prayer,
O hallowed be thy woe!"—

"No sacrament can quench this fire,
Or slake this scorching pain;
No sacrament can bid the dead
Arise and live again.

[Pg 45]

"O break, my heart,—O break at once!
Be thou my god, Despair!
Heaven's heaviest blow has fallen on me,
And vain each fruitless prayer."—

"O enter not in judgment, Lord,
With thy frail child of clay!
She knows not what her tongue has spoke;
Impute it not, I pray!

"Forbear, my child, this desperate woe,
And turn to God and grace;
Well can devotion's heavenly glow
Convert thy bale to bliss."—

"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is bale?
Without my William what were heaven,
Or with him what were hell?"—

Wild she arraigns the eternal doom,
Upbraids each sacred power,
Till, spent, she sought her silent room,
All in the lonely tower.

She beat her breast, she wrung her hands,
Till sun and day were o'er,
And through the glimmering lattice shone
The twinkling of the star.

Then, crash! the heavy drawbridge fell
That o'er the moat was hung;
And, clatter! clatter! on its boards
The hoof of courser rung.

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The clank of echoing steel was heard
As off the rider bounded;
And slowly on the winding stair
A heavy footstep sounded.

And hark! and hark! a knock—Tap! tap!
A rustling stifled noise;—
Door-latch and tinkling staples ring;—
At length a whispering voice.

"Awake, awake, arise, my love!
How, Helen, dost thou fare?
Wakest thou, or sleepest? laughest thou, or weepst?
Hast thought on me, my fair?"—

"My love! my love!—so late by night!—
I waked, I wept for thee:
Much have I borne since dawn of morn;
Where, William, couldst thou be!"—

"We saddle late—from Hungary
I rode since darkness fell;
And to its bourne we both return
Before the matin-bell."—

"O rest this night within my arms,
And warm thee in their fold!

Chill howls through hawthorn bush the wind:—
My love is deadly cold."—

[Pg 47]

"Let the wind howl through hawthorn bush!
This night we must away;
The steed is wight, the spur is bright;
I cannot stay till day.

"Busk, busk, and boune!^[1] Thou mount'st behind
Upon my black barb steed:
O'er stock and stile, a hundred miles,
We haste to bridal bed."—

"To-night—to-night a hundred miles!—
O dearest William, stay!
The bell strikes twelve—dark, dismal hour?
O wait, my love, till day!"—

"Look here, look here—the moon shines clear—
Full fast I ween we ride;
Mount and away! for ere the day
We reach our bridal bed.

"The black barb snorts, the bridle rings;
Haste, busk, and boune, and seat thee!
The feast is made, the chamber spread,
The bridal guests await thee."—

Strong love prevailed: she busks, she bounes,
She mounts the barb behind,
And round her darling William's waist
Her lily arms she twines.

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And, hurry! hurry! off they rode,
As fast as fast might be;
Spurned from the courser's thundering heels
The flashing pebbles flee.

And on the right, and on the left,
Ere they could snatch a view,
Fast, fast each mountain, mead, and plain,
And cot, and castle, flew.

"Sit fast—dost fear?—The moon shines clear—
Fleet goes my barb—keep hold!
Fearest thou?"—"O no!" she faintly said;
"But why so stern and cold?"

"What yonder rings? what yonder sings?
Why shrieks the owlet gray?"—
"'Tis death-bells' clang, 'tis funeral song,
The body to the clay.

"With song and clang, at morrow's dawn.
Ye may inter the dead:
To-night I ride, with my young bride,
To deck our bridal bed.

"Come with thy choir, thou confined guest,
To swell our nuptial song!
Come, priest, to bless our marriage feast!
Come all, come all along!"—

Ceased clang and song; down sunk the bier;
The shrouded corpse arose:
And, hurry, hurry! all the train
The thundering steed pursues.

[Pg 49]

And, forward! forward! on they go;
High snorts the straining steed;
Thick pants the rider's laboring breath,
As headlong on they speed.

"O William, why this savage haste?
And where thy bridal bed?"—
"'Tis distant far, low, damp, and chill,
And narrow, trustless maid."—

"No room for me?"—"Enough for both;—
Speed, speed, my barb, thy course!"
O'er thundering bridge, through boiling surge,
He drove the furious horse.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is wight, the spur is bright,
The flashing pebbles flee.

Fled past on right and left how fast
Each forest, grove, and bower!
On right and left fled past how fast
Each city, town, and tower!

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
Dost fear to ride with me?—
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!"
"O William, let them be!—

[Pg 50]

"See there, see there! What yonder swings
And creaks 'mid whistling rain?"—
"Gibbet and steel, th' accursed wheel;
A murderer in his chain.—

"Hollo! thou felon, follow here:
To bridal bed we ride;
And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
Before me and my bride."—

And, hurry! hurry! clash, clash, clash!
The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind through hazel bush
The wild career attends.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

How fled what moonshine faintly showed!
How fled what darkness hid!
How fled the earth beneath their feet,
The heaven above their head!

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear.
And well the dead can ride;
Does faithful Helen fear for them?"—
"O leave in peace the dead!"—

"Barb! Barb! methinks I hear the cock;
The sand will soon be run:
Barb! Barb! I smell the morning air;
The race is well-nigh done."—

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Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode;
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

"Hurrah! hurrah! well ride the dead;
The bride, the bride is come;
And soon we reach the bridal bed,
For, Helen, here's my home."—

Reluctant on its rusty hinge
Revolved an iron door,
And by the pale moon's setting beam
Were seen a church and tower.

With many a shriek and cry whiz round
The birds of midnight, scared;
And rustling like autumnal leaves
Unhallowed ghosts were heard.

O'er many a tomb and tombstone pale
He spurred the fiery horse,

Till sudden at an open grave
He checked the wondrous course.

The falling gauntlet quits the rein,
Down drops the casque of steel,
The cuirass leaves his shrinking side,
The spur his gory heel.

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The eyes desert the naked skull,
The mouldering flesh the bone,
Till Helen's lily arms entwine
A ghastly skeleton.

The furious barb snorts fire and foam,
And, with a fearful bound,
Dissolves at once in empty air,
And leaves her on the ground.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
Pale spectres flit along,
Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
And howl the funeral song:

"E'en when the heart's with anguish cleft,
Revere the doom of Heaven.
Her soul is from her body reft;
Her spirit be forgiven!"

Bürger's "Leonore"—Translated by Sir Walter Scott.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] *Busk*—to dress. *Boune*—to prepare one's self for a journey.

THE GREETING ON KYNAST.

She said: This narrow chamber is not for me the place,
Said the lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
'Tis pleasanter on horseback, I'll hie me to the chase,
Said the lady Kunigunde!

[Pg 53]

She said: The knight who weds me, I do require of him,
Said the lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
To gallop round the Kynast and break not neck nor limb.

A noble knight came forward and galloped round the wall;
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast,
The lady, without lifting a finger, saw him fall.

And yet another galloped around the battlement;
The lady Kunigunde,
The lady saw him tumble, yet did she not relent.

And rider after rider spurred round his snorting horse;
The lady Kunigunde
Saw him vanish o'er the rampart, and never felt remorse.

Long time the folly lasted, then came no rider more;
The lady Kunigunde,
They would not ride to win her, the trial was too sore.

She stood upon her towers, she looked upon the land,
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast:
I'm all alone at home here, will no one seek my hand?

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Is there none will ride to win me, to win me for his bride,
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast?
O fie, the paltry rider who dreads the bridal ride!

Then out and spake from Thüringen the Landgrave Adelbert:
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
Well may the haughty damsel her worthiness assert.

He trains his horse to gallop on narrow walls of stone;
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
The lady shall not see us break neck or limb or bone.

See here, O noble lady, I'm he that dares the ride!
The lady Kunigunde,
She looks in thoughtful silence, to see him sit in pride.

She saw him now make ready, then trembled she and sighed,
The lady Kunigunde:
Woe's me that I so fearful have made the bridal ride!

Then rode he round the Kynast; her face she turned away,
The lady Kunigunde:
Woe 's me, the knight is riding down to his grave to-day!

He rides around the Kynast, right round the narrow wall;
The lady Kunigunde!
She cannot stir for terror her lily hand at all.

He rides around the Kynast, clear round the battlement;
The lady Kunigunde!
As if a breath might kill him, she held her breath suspent.

He rode around the Kynast and straight to her rode he;
Said the lady Kunigunde of Kynast:
Thanks be to God in heaven, who gave thy life to thee!

Thanks be to God that into thy grave thou didst not ride!
Said the lady Kunigunde:
Come down from off thy horse now, O knight, unto thy bride!

Then spake the noble rider, and greeted, as he sate,
The lady Kunigunde:
O trust a knight for horsemanship! well have I taught thee that.

Now wait till comes another who can the same thing do,
O lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
I've wife and child already, can be no spouse for you.

He gave his steed the spur, now; rode back the way he came;
The lady Kunigunde!
The lady saw him vanish, she swooned with scorn and shame.

And she remains a virgin, her pride had such a fall,
The lady Kunigunde!
Changed to a wooden image she stands in sight of all.

An image, like a hedgehog, with spines for hair, is now
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
The stranger has to kiss it, who climbs the Kynast's brow.

We bring it him to kiss it: and if it shocks his pride,
The lady Kunigunde of Kynast!
He must pay down his forfeit, who will not kiss the bride,
The lady Kunigunde!

Rückert. Tr. C. T. Brooks.

HARRAS, THE BOLD LEAPER.

The world yet waited in shadowy light
The dawn of the rising day;
And scarcely yet had waked the night
From the slumber in which it lay.
But, hark! along the forest way
Unwonted echoes rung,
And all accoutred for the fray
A band of warriors sprung!

And forth they rushed along the plain,
In thunder, to the fight;
And foremost of that martial train
Was Harras, the gallant knight.

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They ride upon their secret way,
O'er forest and vale and down,
To reach their foe while yet 'tis day,
And storm his castled town.

So sally they forth from the forest gloom;
But as they leave its shade
They rush, alas! to meet their doom,
And their progress is betrayed:
For suddenly bursts upon their rear
The foe, with twice their force;
Then out at once rush shield and spear,
And the charger flies on his course.

And the wood in unwonted echoes rang
With the sounds of that deadly fray,
And the sabre's clash and the helmet's clang
Is mixed with the courser's neigh.
A thousand wounds have dyed the field
Unheeded in the strife;
But not a man will ask to yield,
For freedom is dearer than life!

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But their stronger foes must win the day,
And the knights begin to fail;
For the sword hath swept their best array,
And superior powers prevail.
Unconquered alone, to a rocky height
Bold Harras fought his way;
And his brave steed carried him through the fight,
And bore him safe away.

And he left the rein to that trusty steed,
And rode from the fatal fray;
But he gave to his erring path no heed,
And he missed the well-known way.
And when he heard the foemen near,
He sprang from the forest gloom;
But as soon as he reached the daylight clear,
He saw at once his doom!

He had reached a frightful precipice,
Where he heard the deep waves roll;
For he stood on Zschopauthal's dread abyss,
And horror chilled his soul!
For on yonder bank he could espy
The remnant of his band;
And his heart impatient panted high,
As they waved the friendly hand.

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And he longed, as he looked o'er that dreadful steep,
For wings to aid his flight;
For that cliff is full fifty fathoms deep,
And his horse drew back with fright.
And he saw, as he looked behind and below,
On either side his grave:
Behind him, from the coming foe;
Before him, in the wave!

And he chooses 'twixt death from the foemen's hand,
Or death where the deep waves roll;
Then he boldly rides up to that rocky strand,
And commends to the Lord his soul!
And as nearer he hears the foemen ride,
He seeks the utmost steep;
And he plunges his spurs in his courser's side,
And dares the dreadful leap!

And swiftly he sank through the yielding air,
And into the flood he fell;
His steed is dashed to atoms there,
But the knight lives safe and well!
And mid the plaudits of his band,
He stemmed the parting wave,
And soon in safety reached the land,
For Heaven will never forsake the brave!

THE KNIGHT'S LEAP.

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"So the foeman has fired the gate, men of mine,
And the water is spent and done;
Then bring me a cup of the red Ahr-wine;
I never shall drink but this one.

"And fetch me my harness, and saddle my horse,
And lead him me round to the door:
He must take such a leap to-night perforce
As horse never took before.

"I have lived by the saddle for years two score,
And if I must die on tree,
The old saddle-tree, which has borne me of yore,
Is the properest timber for me.

"I have lived my life, I have fought my fight,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trier to Cöln there was never a knight
Led a merrier life than mine.

"So now to show bishop and burgher and priest
How the Altenahr hawk can die,
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He must take to his wings and fly."

He harnessed himself by the clear moonshine,
And he mounted his horse at the door,
And he drained such a cup of the red Ahr-wine
As never man drained before.

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He spurred the old horse, and he held him tight,
And he leapt him out over the wall;
Out over the cliff, out into the night,
Three hundred feet of fall.

They found him next morning below in the glen,
And never a bone in him whole;
But Heaven may yet have more mercy than men
On such a bold rider's soul.

Charles Kingsley.

THE LEAP OF ROUSHAN BEG.

Mounted on Kyrat strong and fleet,
His chestnut steed with four white feet,
Roushan Beg, called Kurroglou,
Son of the road and bandit chief,
Seeking refuge and relief,
Up the mountain pathway flew.

Such was Kyrat's wondrous speed,
Never yet could any steed
Reach the dust-cloud in his course.
More than maiden, more than wife,
More than gold and next to life
Roushan the Robber loved his horse.

In the land that lies beyond
Erzeroum and Trebizond,
Garden-girt his fortress stood;
Plundered khan, or caravan
Journeying north from Koordistan,
Gave him wealth and wine and food.

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Seven hundred and fourscore

Men at arms his livery wore,
Did his bidding night and day.
Now, through regions all unknown,
He was wandering, lost, alone,
Seeking without guide his way.

Suddenly the pathway ends,
Sheer the precipice descends,
Loud the torrent roars unseen;
Thirty feet from side to side
Yawns the chasm; on air must ride
He who crosses this ravine.

Following close in his pursuit,
At the precipice's foot,
Reyhan the Arab of Orfah
Halted with his hundred men,
Shouting upward from the glen,
"La Illáh illa Alláh!"

Gently Roushan Beg caressed
Kyrat's forehead, neck, and breast;
Kissed him upon both his eyes;
Sang to him in his wild way,
As upon the topmost spray
Sings a bird before it flies.

"O my Kyrat, O my steed,
Round and slender as a reed,
Carry me this peril through!
Satin housings shall be thine.
Shoes of gold, O Kyrat mine,
O thou soul of Kurroglou!

[Pg 63]

"Soft thy skin as silken skein,
Soft as woman's hair thy mane,
Tender are thine eyes and true;
All thy hoofs like ivory shine,
Polished bright; O, life of mine,
Leap, and rescue Kurroglou!"

Kyrat, then, the strong and fleet,
Drew together his four white feet,
Paused a moment on the verge,
Measured with his eye the space,
And into the air's embrace
Leaped as leaps the ocean surge.

As the ocean surge o'er sand
Bears a swimmer safe to land,
Kyrat safe his rider bore;
Rattling down the deep abyss
Fragments of the precipice
Rolled like pebbles on a shore.

Roushan's tasselled cap of red
Trembled not upon his head,
Careless sat he and upright;
Neither hand nor bridle shook,
Nor his head he turned to look,
As he galloped out of sight.

[Pg 64]

Flash of harness in the air,
Seen a moment like the glare
Of a sword drawn from its sheath;
Thus the phantom horseman passed,
And the shadow that he cast
Leaped the cataract underneath.

Reyhan the Arab held his breath
While this vision of life and death
Passed above him. "Allahu!"
Cried he. "In all Koordistan
Lives there not so brave a man
As this Robber Kurroglou!"

ANNAN WATER.

"Annan water's wading deep,
And my love Annie's wondrous bonny;
And I am laith she suld weet her feet,
Because I love her best of ony.

"Gar saddle me the bonny black,
Gar saddle sune, and make him ready;
For I will down the Gatehope-Slack,
And all to see my bonny ladye."—

He has loupén on the bonny black,
He stirr'd him wi' the spur right sairly;
But, or he wan the Gatehope-Slack,
I think the steed was wae and weary.

[Pg 65]

He has loupén on the bonny grey,
He rade the right gate and the ready;
I trow he would neither stint nor stay,
For he was seeking his bonny ladye.

O he has ridden o'er field and fell,
Through muir and moss, and mony a mire:
His spurs o' steel were sair to bide,
And fra her fore-feet flew the fire.

"Now, bonny grey, now play your part!
Gin ye be the steed that wins my deary,
Wi' corn and hay ye'se be fed for aye,
And never spur sall make you wearie."—

The grey was a mare, and a right good mare;
But when she wan the Annan water,
She couldna hae ridden a furlong mair,
Had a thousand merks been wadded at her.

"O boatman, boatman, put off your boat!
Put off your boat for gowden money!
I cross the drumly stream the night,
Or never mair I see my honey."—

"O I was sworn sae late yestreen,
And not by ae aith, but by many;
And for a' the gowd in fair Scotland,
I dare na take ye through to Annie."

The side was stey, and the bottom deep,
Frae bank to brae the water pouring;
And the bonny grey mare did sweat for fear,
For she heard the water-kelpy roaring.

[Pg 66]

O he has pou'd aff his dapperpy coat,
The silver buttons glanced bonny;
The waistcoat bursted aff his breast,
He was sae full of melancholy.

He has ta'en the ford at that stream tail;
I wot he swam both strong and steady;
But the stream was broad, and his strength did fail,
And he never saw his bonny ladye!

"O wae betide the frush saugh wand!
And wae betide the bush of brier!
It brake into my true love's hand,
When his strength did fail, and his limbs did tire.

"And wae betide ye, Annan Water,
This night that ye are a drumlie river!
For over thee I'll build a bridge,
That ye never more true love may sever."

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;^[2]
A ferlie^[3] he spied wi' his ee;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

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Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka^[4] tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pulled aff his cap,
And louted^[5] low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see."

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belang to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird^[6] shall never daunton me."—
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

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She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind:
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reached a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will show you ferlies^[7] three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few inquires.

"And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

[Pg 69]

"But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if ye speak word in Elfyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on, and farther on,

And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie."

"My tongue is mine ain," true Thomas said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye."
"Now hold thy peace!" the lady said,
"For as I say, so must it be."

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

Walter Scott.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [2] A spot afterwards included in the domain of Abbotsford.
- [3] Wonder.
- [4] Each.
- [5] Bowed.
- [6] Destiny shall not alarm me.
- [7] Wonders.

THE GREEN GNOME.

A MELODY.

Ring, sing! ring, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, rhyme! chime, rhyme! through dales and dells!
Rhyme, ring! chime, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, sing! rhyme, ring! over fields and fells!

And I galloped and I galloped on my palfrey white as milk,
My robe was of the sea-green woof, my serk was of the silk;
My hair was golden-yellow, and it floated to my shoe;
My eyes were like two harebells bathed in little drops of dew;
My palfrey, never stopping, made a music sweetly blent
With the leaves of autumn dropping all around me as I went;
And I heard the bells, grown fainter, far behind me peal and play,
Fainter, fainter, fainter, till they seemed to die away;
And beside a silver runnel, on a little heap of sand,
I saw the green gnome sitting, with his cheek upon his hand.
Then he started up to see me, and he ran with a cry and bound,
And drew me from my palfrey white and set me on the ground.
O crimson, crimson were his locks, his face was green to see,
But he cried, "O light-haired lassie, you are bound to marry me!"
He clasped me round the middle small, he kissed me on the cheek,
He kissed me once, he kissed me twice, I could not stir or speak;
He kissed me twice, he kissed me thrice; but when he kissed again,
I called aloud upon the name of Him who died for men.

[Pg 71]

Sing, sing! ring, ring! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, rhyme! chime, rhyme! through dales and dells!

Rhyme, ring! chime, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, sing! rhyme, ring! over fields and fells!

O faintly, faintly, faintly, calling men and maids to pray,
So faintly, faintly, faintly rang the bells far away;
And as I named the Blessed Name, as in our need we can,
The ugly green gnome became a tall and comely man:
His hands were white, his beard was gold, his eyes were black as sloes,
His tunic was of scarlet woof, and silken were his hose;
A pensive light from faëryland still lingered on his cheek,
His voice was like the running brook when he began to speak:
"O, you have cast away the charm my step-dame put on me,
Seven years have I dwelt in Faëryland, and you have set me free.
O, I will mount thy palfrey white, and ride to kirk with thee,
And, by those dewy little eyes, we twain will wedded be!"

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Back we galloped, never stopping, he before and I behind,
And the autumn leaves were dropping, red and yellow in the wind;
And the sun was shining clearer, and my heart was high and proud,
As nearer, nearer, nearer rang the kirk bells sweet and loud,
And we saw the kirk, before us, as we trotted down the fells,
And nearer, clearer, o'er us, rang the welcome of the bells.

[Pg 73]

Ring, sing! ring, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, rhyme! chime, rhyme! through dales and dells!
Rhyme, ring! chime, sing! pleasant Sabbath bells!
Chime, sing! rhyme, ring! over fields and fells!

Robert Buchanan.

FRIAR PEDRO'S RIDE.

It was the morning season of the year;
It was the morning era of the land;
The watercourses rang full loud and clear;
Portala's cross stood where Portala's hand
Had planted it when Faith was taught by Fear,
When monks and missions held the sole command
Of all that shore beside the peaceful sea,
Where spring-tides beat their long-drawn réveille.

Out of the Mission of San Luis Rey,
All in that brisk, tumultuous spring weather,
Rode Friar Pedro, in a pious way,
With six dragoons in cuirasses of leather,
Each armed alike for either prayer or fray,
Handcuffs and missals they had slung together;
And as in aid the gospel truth to scatter
Each swung a lasso—*alias* a "riata."

In sooth, that year the harvest had been slack,
The crop of converts scarce worth computation;
Some souls were lost, whose owners had turned back
To save their bodies frequent flagellation;
And some preferred the songs of birds, alack!
To Latin matins and their soul's salvation,
And thought their own wild whoopings were less dreary
Than Father Pedro's droning *miserere*.

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To bring them back to matins and to prime,
To pious works and secular submission,
To prove to them that liberty was crime,—
This was, in fact, the Padre's present mission;
To get new souls perchance at the same time,
And bring them to a "sense of their condition"—
That easy phrase, which, in the past and present,
Means making that condition most unpleasant.

He saw the glebe land guiltless of a furrow;
He saw the wild oats wrestle on the hill;
He saw the gopher working in his burrow;
He saw the squirrel scampering at his will;—
He saw all this and felt no doubt a thorough

And deep conviction of God's goodness; still
He failed to see that in His glory He
Yet left the humblest of His creatures free.

He saw the flapping crow, whose frequent note
Voiced the monotony of land and sky,
Mocking with graceless wing and rusty coat
His priestly presence as he trotted by.
He would have cursed the bird by bell and rote,
But other game just then was in his eye—
A savage camp, whose occupants preferred
Their heathen darkness to the living Word.

[Pg 75]

He rang his bell, and at the martial sound
Twelve silver spurs their jingling rowels clashed;
Six horses sprang across the level ground
As six dragoons in open order dashed;
Above their heads the lassos circled round,
In every eye a pious fervor flashed;
They charged the camp, and in one moment more
They lassoed six and reconverted four.

The Friar saw the conflict from a knoll,
And sang *Laus Deo* and cheered on his men:
"Well thrown, Bautista—that's another soul;
After him, Gomez—try it once again;
This way, Felipe—there the heathen stole;
Bones of St. Francis!—surely that makes *ten*;
Te deum laudamus—but they're very wild;
Non nobis dominus—all right, my child!"

When at that moment—as the story goes—
A certain squaw, who had her foes eluded,
Ran past the Friar—just before his nose.
He stared a moment, and in silence brooded,
Then in his breast a pious frenzy rose
And every other prudent thought excluded;
He caught a lasso, and dashed in a canter
After that Occidental Atalanta.

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High o'er his head he swirled the dreadful noose,
But, as the practice was quite unfamiliar,
His first cast tore Felipe's captive loose
And almost choked Tiburcio Camilla,
And might have interfered with that brave youth's
Ability to gorge the tough *tortilla*;
But all things come by practice, and at last
His flying slip-knot caught the maiden fast.

Then rose above the plain a mingled yell
Of rage and triumph—a demoniac whoop;
The Padre heard it like a passing knell,
And would have loosened his unchristian loop;
But the tough raw-hide held the captive well,
And held, alas! too well the captor-dupe;
For with one bound the savage fled amain,
Dragging horse, Friar, down the lonely plain.

Down the *arroyo*, out across the mead,
By heath and hollow, sped the flying maid,
Dragging behind her still the panting steed
And helpless Friar, who in vain essayed
To cut the lasso or to check his speed.
He felt himself beyond all human aid,
And trusted to the saints—and, for that matter,
To some weak spot in Felipe's *riata*.

Alas! the lasso had been duly blessed,
And, like baptism, held the flying wretch—
A doctrine that the priest had oft expressed—
Which, like the lasso, might be made to stretch
But would not break; so neither could divest
Themselves of it, but, like some awful *fetch*,
The holy Friar had to recognize
The image of his fate in heathen guise.

[Pg 77]

He saw the glebe land guiltless of a furrow;
He saw the wild oats wrestle on the hill;
He saw the gopher standing in his burrow;
He saw the squirrel scampering at his will;—
He saw all this, and felt no doubt how thorough
The contrast was to his condition; still
The squaw kept onward to the sea, till night
And the cold sea-fog hid them both from sight.

The morning came above the serried coast,
Lighting the snow-peaks with its beacon fires,
Driving before it all the fleet-winged host
Of chattering birds above the Mission spires,
Filling the land with light and joy—but most
The savage woods with all their leafy lyres;
In pearly tints and opal flame and fire
The morning came, but not the holy Friar.

Weeks passed away. In vain the Fathers sought
Some trace or token that might tell his story;
Some thought him dead, or, like Elijah, caught
Up to the heavens in a blaze of glory.
In this surmise some miracles were wrought
On his account, and souls in purgatory
Were thought to profit from his intercession;
In brief, his absence made a "deep impression."

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A twelvemonth passed; the welcome Spring once more
Made green the hills beside the white-faced Mission,
Spread her bright dais by the western shore,
And sat enthroned—a most resplendent vision.
The heathen converts thronged the chapel door
At morning mass, when, says the old tradition,
A frightful whoop throughout the church resounded,
And to their feet the congregation bounded.

A tramp of hoofs upon the beaten course,
Then came a sight that made the bravest quail:
A phantom Friar on a spectre horse,
Dragged by a creature decked with horns and tail.
By the lone Mission, with the whirlwind's force,
They madly swept, and left a sulphurous trail—
And that was all—enough to tell the story
And leave unblessed those souls in purgatory.

And ever after, on that fatal day
That Friar Pedro rode abroad lassoing,
A ghostly couple came and went away
With savage whoop and heathenish hallooing,
Which brought discredit on San Luis Rey,
And proved the Mission's ruin and undoing;
For ere ten years had passed, the squaw and Friar
Performed to empty walls and fallen spire.

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The Mission is no more; upon its walls
The golden lizards slip, or breathless pause
Still as the sunshine brokenly that falls
Through crannied roof and spider-webs of gauze;
No more the bell its solemn warning calls—
A holier silence thrills and overawes;
And the sharp lights and shadows of to-day
Outline the Mission of San Luis Rey.

Bret Harte.

TAM O' SHANTER.

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,

We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam O' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drowned in Doon;
Or caught wi' warlocks i' the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthened, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favors, secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himself amang the nappy!
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blessed, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white, then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;—
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast on;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Well mounted on his gray mare, Meg,—
A better never lifted leg,—
Tam skelpit on through dub and mire,

Despising wind and rain and fire;
 Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
 Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
 Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,
 Lest bogles catch him unawares;
 Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,
 Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
 Whare in the snaw the chapman smooored;
 And past the birks and meikle-stane,
 Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
 And through the whins, and by the cairn,
 Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn:
 And near the thorn aboon the well,
 Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
 Before him Doon pours all his floods;
 The doubling storm roars through the woods;
 The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Near and more near the thunders roll:
 When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
 Kirk Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
 Through ilka bore the beams were glancing;
 And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
 What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
 Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
 Wi' usquebae, we'll face the Devil!
 The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
 Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle,
 But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
 Till by the heel and hand admonished,
 She ventured forward on the light;
 And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!
 Warlocks and witches in a dance;
 Nae cotillon brent new frae France,
 But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
 Put life and mettle in their heels.
 At winnock-bunker in the east,
 There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
 A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
 To gie them music was his charge:
 He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl,
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl,—
 Coffins stood round, like open presses,
 That shawed the dead in their last dresses;
 And by some devilish cantrip sleight,
 Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
 By which heroic Tam was able
 To note upon the haly table,
 A murderers's banes in gibbet airns;
 Two span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
 A thief, new cutted fra a rape,
 Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
 Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red rusted;
 Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted;
 A garter which a babe had strangled;
 A knife a father's throat had mangled,
 Whom his ain son o' life bereft—
 The gray hairs yet stack to the heft;
 Three lawyers' tongues turned inside out,
 Wi' lies seamed like a beggar's clout;
 And priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
 Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk:
 Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
 Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowered, amazed, and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
 The piper loud and louder blew;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew;
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleckit,
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies to the wark,
 And linket at it in her sark.

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queans
 A' plump and strapping in their teens:

Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen;
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But withered beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping an' flinging on a crummock—
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenned what was what fu' brawlie.
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night inlisted in the core
(Lang after kenned on Carrick shore!
For monie a beast to dead she shot,
And perished monie a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear
And kept the country-side in fear),
Her cutty-sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah! little kenned thy reverend grannie
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots (twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance o' witches!

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But here my Muse her wing maun cow'r;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jad she was and strang!)
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched.
Ev'n Satan glowered, and fidget fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant a' was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs,—the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'lt get thy fairin'!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'—
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,—
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claut her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.
Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son take heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

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THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

The Wildgrave winds his bugle horn,
To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the brush, the brier, the brake;
While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
The mountain echoes startling wake.

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The beams of God's own hallowed day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep the bell had tolled.

But still the Wildgrave onward rides;
Halloo, halloo! and hark again!
When spurring from opposing sides,
Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
The right-hand steed was silver white,
The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand Horseman young and fair,
His smile was like the morn of May;
The left, from eye of tawny glare,
Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
Cried, "Welcome, welcome, noble lord!
What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
To match the princely chase, afford?"

"Cease thy loud bugle's clanging knell,"
Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
"And for devotion's choral swell,
Exchange the rude unhallowed noise.

"To-day, the ill-omened chase forbear,
Yon bell yet summons to the fane;
To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain."—

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"Away, and sweep the glades along!"
The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
"To muttering monks leave matin-song,
And bell, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurred his ardent steed,
And, launching forward with a bound,
"Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
Would leave the jovial horn and hound?"

"Hence, if our manly sport offend!
With pious fools go chant and pray:
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-browed friend;
Halloo, halloo! and, hark away!"

The Wildgrave spurred his courser light,
O'er moss and moor, o'er holt and hill;
And on the left and on the right,
Each Stranger Horseman followed still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
A stag more white than mountain snow;
And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
"Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!"

A heedless wretch has crossed the way;
He gasps, the thundering hoofs below;—

But, live who can, or die who may,
Still, "Forward, forward!" on they go.

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See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with autumn's blessings crowned;
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
A husbandman, with toil embrowned;

"O mercy, mercy, noble lord!
Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
"Earned by the sweat these brows have poured,
In scorching hour of fierce July."

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey,
The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound! so basely born,
Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!"—
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"

So said, so done:—A single bound
Clears the poor laborer's humble pale;
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again uproused, the timorous prey
Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill;
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

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Too dangerous solitude appeared;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd;
Amid the flock's domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
His track the steady blood-hounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall;—
"O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
These herds, a widow's little all;
These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care!"—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

"Unmannered dog! To stop my sport
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these carrion kine!"—

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"
And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
He cheers his furious hounds to go.

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In heaps the throttled victims fall;
Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
The murderous cries the stag appall,—
Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmeared, and white with foam,
While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
The humble hermit's hallowed bower.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
Fast rattling on his traces go;
The sacred chapel rung around
With, "Hark away! and, holla, ho!"

All mild, amid the route profane,
The holy hermit poured his prayer;
"Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
Revere his altar, and forbear!"

"The meanest brute has rights to plead,
Which, wronged by cruelty, or pride,
Draw vengeance on the ruthless head:—
Be warned at length, and turn aside."

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
The Black, wild whooping, points the prey:—
Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
But frantic keeps the forward way.

"Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!"

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He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"—
But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
And clamor of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle-sound,
A deadly silence reigned alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn,
In vain to call: for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reached his ears:
His courser rooted to the ground,
The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
Dark as the darkness of the grave;
And not a sound the still invades,
Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head
At length the solemn silence broke;
And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
The awful voice of thunder spoke.

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"Oppressor of creation fair!
Apostate Spirits' hardened tool!
Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
The measure of thy cup is full.

"Be chased forever through the wood;
Forever roam the affrighted wild;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God's meanest creature is his child."

'Twas hushed:—One flash, of sombre glare,
With yellow tinged the forests brown;
Uprose the Wildgrave's bristling hair,
And horror chilled each nerve and bone.

Cold poured the sweat in freezing rill;
A rising wind began to sing;
And louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call;—her entrails rend;
From yawning rifts, with many a yell,

Mixed with sulphureous flames, ascend
The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And, "Hark away, and holla, ho!"

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With wild despair's reverted eye,
Close, close behind, he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs and eager cry;
In frantic fear he scours along.

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till time itself shall have an end;
By day, they scour earth's caverned space,
At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the lated peasant hears;
Appalled, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
For human pride, for human woe,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of "Holla, ho!"

Bürger's Wilde Jäger. Tr. Walter Scott.

LÜTZOW'S WILD CHASE.

What is it that beams in the bright sunshine,
And echoes yet nearer and nearer?
And see! how it spreads in a long dark line,
And hark! how its horns in the distance combine
To impress with affright the hearer!
And ask ye what means the daring race?
This is—Lützow's wild and desperate chase!

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See, they leave the dark wood in silence all,
And from hill to hill are seen flying;
In ambush they'll lie till the deep nightfall,
Then ye'll hear the hurrah! and the rifle ball!
And the French will be falling and dying!
And ask ye what means their daring race?
This is—Lützow's wild and desperate chase!

Where the vine-boughs twine, the Rhine waves roar,
And the foe thinks its waters shall hide him;
But see, they fearless approach the shore,
And they leap in the stream, and swim proudly o'er,
And stand on the bank beside him!
And ask ye what means the daring race?
This is—Lützow's wild and desperate chase!

Why roars in the valley the raging fight,
Where swords clash red and gory?
O fierce is the strife of that deadly fight,
For the spark of young Freedom is newly alight,
And it breaks into flames of glory!
And ask ye what means the daring race?
This is—Lützow's wild and desperate chase!

See yon warrior who lies on a gory spot,
From life compelled to sever;
Yet he never is heard to lament his lot,
And his soul at its parting shall tremble not,

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Since his country is saved forever!
And if ye will ask at the end of his race,
Still 'tis—Lützow's wild and desperate chase!

The wild chase, and the German chase
Against tyranny and oppression!
Therefore weep not, loved friends, at this last embrace,
For freedom has dawned on our loved birth-place,
And our deaths shall insure its possession!
And 'twill ever be said from race to race,
This was—Lützow's wild and desperate chase!

Theodor Körner.

THE ERL-KING.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

O, who rides by night thro' the woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child;
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm,
To hold himself fast, and to keep himself warm.

"O father, see yonder! see yonder!" he says;
"My boy, upon what dost thou fearfully gaze?"—
"O, 'tis the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud"—
"No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

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(THE ERL-KING SPEAKS.)

"O come and go with me, thou loveliest child;
By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy."

"O father, my father, and did you not hear
The Erl-King whisper so loud in my ear?"—
"Be still, my heart's darling—my child, be at ease;
It was but the wild blast as it sung thro' the trees."

ERL-KING.

"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child."

"O father, my father, and saw you not plain,
The Erl-King's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?"—
"O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon;
It was the gray willow that danced to the moon."

ERL-KING.

"O come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away."—
"O father! O father! now, now keep your hold,
The Erl-King has seized me, his grasp is so cold!"—

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Sore trembled the father; he spurred thro' the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasped to his bosom, the infant was *dead!*

Walter Scott.

MAZEPPA'S RIDE.

"Bring forth the horse!"—the horse was brought,
 In truth, he was a noble steed,
 A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
 Who looked as though the speed of thought
 Were in his limbs: but he was wild,
 Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
 With spur and bridle undefiled,—
 'Twas but a day he had been caught;
 And snorting, with erected mane,
 And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
 In the full foam of wrath and dread,
 To me the desert-born was led;
 They bound me on, that menial throng,
 Upon his back with many a thong;
 Then loosed him with a sudden lash,—
 Away!—away!—and on we dash!
 Torrents less rapid and less rash.
 Away!—away! My breath was gone,—
 I saw not where he hurried on:
 'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
 And on he foamed,—away!—away!—
 The last of human sounds which rose,
 As I was darted from my foes,
 Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
 Which on the wind came roaring after
 A moment from that rabble rout:
 With sudden wrath I wrenched my head,
 And snapped the cord, which to the mane
 Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
 And writhing half my form about,
 Howled back my curse; but midst the tread,
 The thunder of my courser's speed,
 Perchance they did not hear nor heed:
 It vexes me,—for I would fain
 Have paid their insult back again.
 I paid it well in after days:
 There is not of that castle gate,
 Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
 Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
 Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
 Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
 Where stood the hearthstone of the hall;
 And many a time ye there might pass,
 Nor dream that e'er that fortress was:
 I saw its turrets in a blaze,
 Their crackling battlements all cleft,
 And the hot lead pour down like rain
 From off the scorched and blackening roof,
 Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
 They little thought that day of pain,
 When launched, as on the lightning's flash,
 They bade me to destruction dash,
 That one day I should come again,
 With twice five thousand horse, to thank
 The count for his uncourteous ride.
 They played me then a bitter prank,
 When, with the wild horse for my guide,
 They bound me to his foaming flank:
 At length I played them one as frank,—
 For time at last sets all things even,—
 And if we do but watch the hour,
 There never yet was human power
 Which could evade, if unforgiven,
 The patient search and vigil long
 Of him who treasures up a wrong.

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"Away, away, my steed and I,
 Upon the pinions of the wind,
 All human dwellings left behind;
 We sped like meteors through the sky,
 When with its crackling sound the night
 Is checkered with the northern light:
 Town,—village,—none were on our track,
 But a wild plain of far extent,
 And bounded by a forest black:

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And, save the scarce-seen battlement
 On distant heights of some strong hold,
 Against the Tartars built of old,
 No trace of man. The year before
 A Turkish army had marched o'er;
 And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
 The verdure flies the bloody sod:
 The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
 And a low breeze crept moaning by,—
 I could have answered with a sigh,—
 But fast we fled, away, away,—
 And I could neither sigh nor pray;
 And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
 Upon the courser's bristling mane:
 But, snorting still with rage and fear,
 He flew upon his far career:
 At times I almost thought, indeed,
 He must have slackened in his speed:
 But no,—my bound and slender frame
 Was nothing to his angry might,
 And merely like a spur became:
 Each motion which I made to free
 My swoln limbs from their agony
 Increased his fury and affright:
 I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
 But yet he swerved as from a blow;
 And, starting to each accent, sprang
 As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
 Meantime my chords were wet with gore,
 Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
 And in my tongue the thirst became
 A something fierier far than flame.

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"We neared the wild wood,—'twas so wide,
 I saw no bounds on either side;
 'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
 That bent not to the roughest breeze
 Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
 And strips the forest in its haste,—
 But these were few, and far between,
 Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
 Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
 Ere strown by those autumnal eves
 That nip the forest's foliage dead,
 Discolored with a lifeless red,
 Which stands thereon like stiffened gore
 Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
 And some long winter's night hath shed
 Its frost o'er every tombless head,
 So cold and stark the raven's beak
 May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
 'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
 And here and there a chestnut stood,
 The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
 But far apart,—and well it were,
 Or else a different lot were mine,—
 The boughs gave way, and did not tear
 My limbs; and I found strength to bear
 My wounds, already scarred with cold,—
 My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
 We rustled through the leaves like wind,
 Left shrubs and trees and wolves behind;
 By night I heard them on the track,
 Their troop came hard upon our back,
 With their long gallop, which can tire
 The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
 Where'er we flew they followed on,
 Nor left us with the morning sun;
 Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
 At daybreak winding through the wood,
 And through the night had heard their feet
 Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
 O, how I wished for spear or sword,
 At least to die amidst the horde,
 And perish—if it must be so—

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At bay, destroying many a foe.
When first my courser's race begun,
I wished the goal already won;
But now I doubted strength and speed.
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewildered with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths he past,—
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favored child
Balked of its wish; or, fiercer still,
A woman piqued, who has her will.

"The wood was past; 'twas more than noon;
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold,—
Prolonged endurance tames the bold:
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er:
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirred beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattlesnake's, in act to strike,
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies rolled round,
I seemed to sink upon the ground;
But erred, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turned sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbbed awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go,
And strove to wake; but could not make
My senses climb up from below:
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain;
But soon it passed, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust:
No matter; I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face—before—and now.

"My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb; till grown a pang
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflowed, though thick and chill;
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight returned, though dim, alas!
And thickened, as it were, with glass.

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Methought the dash of waves was nigh;
There was a gleam too of the sky,
Studded with stars;—it is no dream:
The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance.
And with a temporary strength
My stiffened limbs were rebaptized,
My courser's broad breast proudly braves,
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance!
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear,
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,
I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew.

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"With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repelling bank.
We gain the top: a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,
And onward, onward, onward, seems
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight;
And here and there a speck of white,
Or scattered spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right.
But naught distinctly seen
In the dim waste, would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheered me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

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"Onward we went,—but slack and slow;
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour;
But useless all to me.
His new-born tameness naught availed,
My limbs were bound; my force had failed,
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,—
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolonged their pain:
The dizzy race seemed almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won:
Some streaks announced the coming sun.—
How slow, alas! he came!
Methought that mist of dawning gray
Would never dapple into day;
How heavily it rolled away,—
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And called the radiance from their cars,
And filled the earth, from his deep throne,

With lonely lustre, all his own.

"Up rose the sun; the mists were curled
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around—behind—before:
What bootied it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel,—none of toil;
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still staggered on;
And still we were—or seemed—alone:
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs?

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No, no! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!

I strove to cry,—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse,—and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying main,
Wide nostrils,—never stretched by pain,—
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarred by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,

Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet;
The sight reserved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answered, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immovable,

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His first and last career is done!
On came the troop,—they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong:
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seemed the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide;
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct from a human eye,—

They left me there, to my despair,
Linked to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me,—and there we lay,
The dying on the dead!

Byron.

THE GIAOUR'S RIDE.

[Pg 110]

Who thundering comes on blackest steed,
With slackened bit and hoof of speed?

Beneath the clattering iron's sound
The caverned echoes wake around
In lash for lash, and bound for bound;
The foam that streaks the courser's side
Seems gathered from the ocean-tide:
Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
There's none within his rider's breast;
And though to-morrow's tempest lower,
'Tis calmer than thy heart, young Giaour!
I know thee not, I loathe thy race,
But in thy lineaments I trace
What time shall strengthen, not efface:
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt;
Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
As meteor-like thou glidest by,
Right well I view and deem thee one
Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On—on he hastened, and he drew
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a demon of the night
He passed, and vanished from my sight,
His aspect and his air impressed
A troubled memory on my breast,
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
He winds around; he hurries by;
The rock relieves him from mine eye;
For well I ween unwelcome he
Whose glance is fixed on those that flee;
And not a star but shines too bright
On him who takes such timeless flight.
He wound along; but ere he passed
One glance he snatched, as if his last,
A moment checked his wheeling steed,
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood—
Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
The crescent glimmers on the hill,
The Mosque's high lamps are quivering still:
Though too remote for sound to wake
In echoes of the far tophaike,
The flashes of each joyous peal
Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal,
To-night, set Rhamazani's sun;
To-night, the Bairam feast's begun;
To-night—but who and what art thou
Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
And what are these to thine, or thee,
That thou should'st either pause or flee?

He stood—some dread was on his face,
Soon Hatred settled in its place:
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient Anger's hasty blush,
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.
His brow was bent, his eye was glazed;
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high,
As doubting to return or fly:
Impatient of his flight delayed,
Here loud his raven charger neighed—
Down glanced that hand, and grasped his blade;
That sound had burst his waking dream,
As Slumber starts at owlet's scream.
The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
Away, away, for life he rides:
Swift as the hurled on high jerreed
Springs to the touch his startled steed;
The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;

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The crag is won, no more is seen
His Christian crest and haughty mien.
'Twas but an instant he restrained
That fiery barb so sternly reined;
'Twas but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by death pursued:
But in that instant o'er his soul
Winters of Memory seemed to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt *he* then, at once opprest
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause, which pondered o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date!
Though in Time's record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that Conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

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The hour is past, the Giaour is gone;
And did he fly or fall alone?
Woe to that hour he came or went!
The curse of Hassan's sin was sent
To turn a palace to a tomb;
He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom,
Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death—
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead!

Byron.

THE NORSEMAN'S RIDE.

The frosty fires of Northern starlight
Gleamed on the glittering snow,
And through the forest's frozen branches
The shrieking winds did blow;
A floor of blue, translucent marble
Kept ocean's pulses still,
When, in the depth of dreary midnight,
Opened the burial hill.

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Then while a low and creeping shudder
Thrilled upward through the ground,
The Norseman came, as armed for battle,
In silence from his mound:
He, who was mourned in solemn sorrow
By many a swordsman bold,
And harps that wailed along the ocean,
Struck by the Skalds of old.

Sudden, a swift and silver shadow
Rushed up from out the gloom,—
A horse that stamped with hoof impatient,
Yet noiseless, on the tomb.
"Ha, Surtur! let me hear thy tramping,
Thou noblest Northern steed,
Whose neigh along the stormy headlands
Bade the bold Viking heed!"

He mounted: like a north-light streaking
The sky with flaming bars,
They, on the winds so wildly shrieking,
Shot up before the stars.
"Is this thy mane, my fearless Surtur,
That streams against my breast?"

Is this thy neck, that curve of moonlight,
Which Helva's hand caressed?

"No misty breathing strains thy nostril,
Thine eye shines blue and cold,
Yet, mounting up our airy pathway,
I see thy hoofs of gold!
Not lighter o'er the springing rainbow
Walhalla's gods repair,
Than we, in sweeping journey over
The bending bridge of air.

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"Far, far around, star-gleams are sparkling
Amid the twilight space;
And Earth, that lay so cold and darkling,
Has veiled her dusky face.
Are those the Nornes that beckon onward
To seats at Odin's board,
Where nightly by the hands of heroes
The foaming mead is poured?

"'Tis Skuld! her star-eye speaks the glory
That waits the warrior's soul,
When on its hinge of music opens
The gateway of the Pole,—
When Odin's warder leads the hero
To banquets never done,
And Freya's eyes outshine in summer
The ever-risen sun.

"On! on! the Northern lights are streaming
In brightness like the morn,
And pealing far amid the vastness,
I hear the Gjallarhorn:
The heart of starry space is throbbing
With songs of minstrels old,
And now, on high Walhalla's portal,
Gleam Surtur's hoofs of gold!"

Bayard Taylor.

BOOT AND SADDLE.

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"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my Castle, before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,
(*Cho.*) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay,
(*Cho.*) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
(*Cho.*) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?
(*Cho.*) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Robert Browning.

THE CAVALIER'S ESCAPE.

Trample! trample! went the roan,
Trap! trap! went the gray;
But pad! pad! pad! like a thing that was mad,

My chestnut broke away.—
It was just five miles from Salisbury town,
And but one hour to day.

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Thud! thud! came on the heavy roan,
Rap! rap! the mettled gray;
But my chestnut mare was of blood so rare,
That she showed them all the way.
Spur on! spur on!—I doffed my hat,
And wished them all good day.

They splashed through miry rut and pool,—
Splintered through fence and rail;
But chestnut Kate switched over the gate,—
I saw them droop and tail.
To Salisbury town—but a mile of down,
Once over this brook and rail.

Trap! trap! I heard their echoing hoofs
Past the walls of mossy stone;
The roan flew on at a staggering pace,
But blood is better than bone.
I patted old Kate, and gave her the spur,
For I knew it was all my own.

But trample! trample! came their steeds,
And I saw their wolfs' eyes burn;
I felt like a royal hart at bay,
And made me ready to turn.
I looked where highest grew the may,
And deepest arched the fern.

I flew at the first knave's sallow throat;
One blow, and he was down.
The second rogue fired twice, and missed;
I sliced the villain's crown.
Clove through the rest, and flogged brave Kate,
Fast, fast to Salisbury town!

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Pad! pad! they came on the level sward,
Thud! thud! upon the sand;
With a gleam of swords, and a burning match,
And a shaking of flag and hand:
But one long bound, and I passed the gate,
Safe from the canting band.

Walter Thornbury.

KING JAMES'S RIDE.

"Stand, Bayard, stand!"—the steed obeyed,
With arching neck and bending head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armed heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merry-men followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mocked thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,

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They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoof strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their courser's sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With splash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career looked down.

Walter Scott.

DELORAINES RIDE.

........*....*

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,
As she paused at the arched door:
Then from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Deloraine.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couched Border lance by knee;
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow, or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

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"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb.
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better hadst thou ne'er been born."—

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"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;

Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon crossed the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,
And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoined,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turned him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

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A moment now he slacked his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band.
And loosened in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crag the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn?
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love!

Unchallenged, thence passed Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain.
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.
At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say
Was daggled by the dashing spray:
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing place.

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Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallowed morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day;

When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seemed dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he passed, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is wakened by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reached, 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

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Sir Walter Scott.

GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this:—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtaxed; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And prayed him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these*?"—"But I would die," said she.
He laughed, and swore by Peter and by Paul:
Then filliped at the diamond in her ear;
"O ay, ay, ay, you talk!"—"Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answered, "Ride you naked through the town,
And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

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So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she would loose
The people: therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barred.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She lingered, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee;

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Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reached
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazoned with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listened round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors through her pulses: the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but she
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flowered elder-thicket from the field
Gleam through the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity:
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peeped—but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivelled into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancelled a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, passed: and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers,
One after one: but even then she gained
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and crowned,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

Alfred Tennyson.

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"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX."

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Rebuckled the check-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

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At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix,"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

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So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, for "Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

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And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

Robert Browning.

THE LANDLORD'S TALE.

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE.

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

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Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,

Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

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Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

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A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! and yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast

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At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

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H. W. Longfellow.

SHERIDAN'S RIDE.

Up from the South at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And louder yet into Winchester rolled
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good broad highway leading down;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night,
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need;
He stretched away with his utmost speed;
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

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Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering South,
The dust, like smoke from the cannon's mouth;
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.
The heart of the steed and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,
Impatient to be where the battle-field calls;
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,

With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet the road
Like an arrowy alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind,
And the steed, like a bark fed with furnace fire,
Swept on, with his wild eye full of ire.
But lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;
He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops,
What was done? what to do? a glance told him both,
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line, mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.
With foam and with dust the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,
He seemed to the whole great army to say,
"I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester down, to save the day!"

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
The American soldiers' Temple of Fame;
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
"Here is the steed that saved the day,
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!"

Thomas Buchanan Read.

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KEARNY AT SEVEN PINES.

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So that soldierly legend is still on its journey,—
That story of Kearny who knew not to yield!
'Twas the day when with Jameson, fierce Berry, and Birney,
Against twenty thousand he rallied the field.
Where the red volleys poured, where the clamor rose highest,
Where the dead lay in clumps through the dwarf oak and pine;
Where the aim from the thicket was surest and nighest,—
No charge like Phil Kearny's along the whole line.

When the battle went ill, and the bravest were solemn,
Near the dark Seven Pines, where we still held our ground,
He rode down the length of the withering column,
And his heart at our war-cry leapt up with a bound;
He snuffed, like his charger, the wind of the powder,—
His sword waved us on, and we answered the sign:
Loud our cheers as we rushed, but his laugh rang the louder,
"There's the devil's own fun, boys, along the whole line!"

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How he strode his brown steed! How we saw his blade brighten
In the one hand still left,—and the reins in his teeth!
He laughed like a boy when the holidays heighten,
But a soldier's glance shot from his visor beneath.
Up came the reserves to the mellay infernal,
Asking where to go in,—through the clearing or pine?
"Oh, anywhere! Forward! 'Tis all the same, Colonel:
You'll find lovely fighting along the whole line!"

Oh, evil the black shroud of night at Chantilly,
That hid him from sight of his brave men and tried!
Foul, foul sped the bullet that clipped the white lily,
The flower of our knighthood, the whole army's pride!
Yet we dream that he still,—in that shadowy region,
Where the dead form their ranks at the wan drummer's sign,—

Rides on, as of old, down the length of his legion,
And the word still is Forward! along the whole line.

Edmund Clarence Stedman.

THE RIDE OF COLLINS GRAVES.

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AN INCIDENT OF THE FLOOD IN MASSACHUSETTS, ON MAY 16, 1874.

No song of a soldier riding down
To the raging fight from Winchester town;
No song of a time that shook the earth
With the nations' throes at a nation's birth;
But the song of a brave man, free from fear
As Sheridan's self, or Paul Revere;
Who risked what they risked, free from strife,
And its promise of glorious pay—his life!

The peaceful valley has waked and stirred,
And the answering echoes of life are heard:
The dew still clings to the trees and grass,
And the early toilers smiling pass,
As they glance aside at the white-walled homes,
Or up the valley, where merrily comes
The brook that sparkles in diamond rills
As the sun comes over the Hampshire hills.

What was it, that passed like an ominous breath—
Like a shiver of fear, or a touch of death?
What was it? The valley is peaceful still,
And the leaves are afire on top of the hill.
It was not a sound—nor a thing of sense—
But a pain, like the pang of the short suspense
That thrills the being of those who see
At their feet the gulf of Eternity!

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The air of the valley has felt the chill:
The workers pause at the door of the mill;
The housewife, keen to the shivering air,
Arrests her foot on the cottage stair,
Instinctive taught by the mother-love,
And thinks of the sleeping ones above.
Why start the listeners? Why does the course
Of the mill-stream widen? Is it a horse—
Hark to the sound of his hoofs, they say—
That gallops so wildly Williamsburg way!

God! what was that, like a human shriek
From the winding valley? Will nobody speak?
Will nobody answer those women who cry
As the awful warnings thunder by?

Whence come they? Listen! And now they hear
The sound of the galloping horse-hoofs near;
They watch the trend of the vale, and see
The rider who thunders so menacingly,
With waving arms and warning scream
To the home-filled banks of the valley stream.
He draws no rein, but he shakes the street
With a shout and the ring of the galloping feet;
And this the cry he flings to the wind:
"To the hills for your lives! The flood is behind!"

He cries and is gone; but they know the worst—
The breast of the Williamsburg dam has burst!
The basin that nourished their happy homes
Is changed to a demon—It comes! it comes!

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A monster in aspect, with shaggy front
Of shattered dwellings, to take the brunt
Of the homes they shatter—white-maned and hoarse,
The merciless Terror fills the course
Of the narrow valley, and rushing raves,

With Death on the first of its hissing waves,
Till cottage and street and crowded mill
Are crumbled and crushed.

But onward still,
In front of the roaring flood is heard
The galloping horse and the warning word.
Thank God! the brave man's life is spared!
From Williamsburg town he nobly dared
To race with the flood and take the road
In front of the terrible swath it mowed.
For miles it thundered and crashed behind,
But he looked ahead with a steadfast mind;
"They must be warned!" was all he said,
As away on his terrible ride he sped.

When heroes are called for, bring the crown
To this Yankee rider: send him down
On the stream of time with the Curtius old;
His deed as the Roman's was brave and bold,
And the tale can as noble a thrill awake,
For he offered his life for the people's sake.

John Boyle O'Reilly.

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A TALE OF PROVIDENCE.

The tall green tree its shadow cast
Upon Howe's army that southward passed
From Gordon's Ford to the Quaker town,
Intending in quarters to settle down
Till snows were gone, and spring again
Should easier make a new campaign.

Beyond the fences that lined the way,
The fields of Captain Richardson lay;
His woodland and meadows reached far and wide,
From the hills behind to the Schuylkill's side,
Across the stream, in the mountain gorge,
He could see the smoke of the valley forge.

The Captain had fought in the frontier war;
When the fight was done, bearing seam and scar,
He marched back home to tread once more
The same tame round he had trod before,
And turn his thoughts with sighs of regret
To his ploughshares, wishing them sword-blades yet.

He put the meadow in corn that year,
And swore till his blacks were white with fear.
He plowed, and planted, and married a wife,
But life grew weary with inward strife.
His blood was hot and his throbbing brain
Beat with the surf of some far main.

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Should he sack a town, or rob the mail,
Or on the wide seas a pirate sail?
He pondered it over, concluding instead,
To buy three steeds in Arabia bred,
On Sopus, Fearnaught, or Scipio,
He felt his blood more evenly flow.

To his daughter Tacey, the coming days
Brought health, and beauty, and graceful ways.
He taught her to ride his fleetest steed
At a five-barred fence, or a ditch at need,
And the Captain's horses, his hounds, and his child
Were famous from sea to forests wild.

........*....*

Master and man from home were gone,
And Fearnaught held the stables alone,

And Mistress Tacey her spirit showed
The morning the British came down the road.
She hid the silver, and drove the cows
To the island behind the willow boughs.

Was time too short? or did she forget
That Fearnaught stood in the stables yet?
Across the fields to the gate she ran,
And followed the path 'neath the grape-arbors' span;
On the doorstep she paused and turned to see
The head of the line beneath the green tree.

The last straggler passed, the night came on,
And then 'twas discovered that Fearnaught was gone;
Sometime, somehow, from his stall he was led,
Where an old gray horse was left in his stead,
And Tacey must prove to her father that she
Had been prepared for the emergency.

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For the words he scattered on kind soil fell,
And Tacey had learned his maxim well
In the stories he read. She remembered the art
That concealed the fear in Esther's heart;
How the words of the woman Abigail
Appeased the king's wrath, the deed of Jael!

How Judith went from the city's gate
Across the plain as the day grew late,
To the tent of the great Assyrian;
The leader exalted with horse and man,
And brought back his head, said Tacey: "Of course,
A more difficult feat than to bring back a horse."

In the English camp the reveille drum
Told the sleeping troops that the dawn had come,
And the shadows abroad that with night were blent
At the drum's tap startled, crept under each tent
As Tacey stole from the sheltering wood
Across the wet grass where the horse pound stood.

Hark! was it the twitter of frightened bird,
Or was it the challenge of sentry she heard?
She entered unseen, but her footsteps she stayed
When the old gray horse in the wood still, neighed,
Half hid in the mist a shape loomed tall,
A steed that answered her well-known call.

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With freedom beyond for the recompense
She sprang to his back, and leaped the fence;
Too late the alarm; but Tacey heard
As she sped away how the camp was stirred,
The stamping of horses, the shouts of men
And the bugle's impatient call again.

Loudly and fast on the Ridge Road beat
The regular fall of Fearnaught's feet,
On his broad, bare back his rider's seat
Was as firm as the tread of the steed so fleet;
Small need of saddle, or bridle rein,
He answered as well her touch on his mane.

On down the hill by the river shore,
Faster and faster she rode than before;
Her bonnet fell back, her head was bare,
And the river breeze that freed her hair
Dispersed the fog, and she heard the shout
Of the troopers behind when the sun came out.

The wheel at Van Deering's had dripped nearly dry,
In Sabbath-like stillness the morning passed by;
Then the clatter of hoofs came down the hill,
And the white old miller ran out from the mill.
But he only saw through the dust of the road
The last red-coat that faintly showed.

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To Tacey the sky, and the trees, and the wind

Seemed all to rush toward her, and follow behind,
Her lips were set firm, and pale was her cheek
As she plunged down the hill and through the creek,
The tortoise shell comb that she lost that day
The Wissahickon carried away.

On the other side up the stony hill
The feet of Fearnaught went faster still,
But somewhat backward the troopers fell,
For the hill, and the pace, began to tell
On their horses worn with a long campaign
O'er rugged mountains, and weary plain.

The road was deserted, for when men fought
A secret path the traveler sought;
Two scared idlers in Levering's Inn
Fled to the woods at the coming din,
The watch dog ran to bark his delight,
But pursued and pursuers were out of sight.

Surely the distance between them increased,
And the shouts of the troopers had long since ceased,
One after another pulled his rein
And rode with great oaths to the camp again.
Oft a look backward Tacey sent
To the fading red of the regiment.

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She heard the foremost horseman call;
She saw the horse stumble, the rider fall;
She patted her steed and checked his pace
And leisurely rode the rest of the race.
When the Seven-Stars' sign on the horizon showed
Behind not a trooper was on the road.

In vain had they shouted who followed in chase,
In vain their wild ride; so ended the race.
Though fifty strong voices may clamor and call,
If she hear not the strongest, she hears not them all;
Though fifty fleet horses go galloping fast,
One swifter than all shall be furthest at last.

Said the well-pleased Captain when he came home:
"The steed shall be thine and a new silver comb.
'Twas a daring deed and bravely done."
As proud of the praise as the promise won,
The maiden stole from the house to feed
With a generous hand her gallant steed.

Unavailing the storms of the century beat
With the roar of thunder, or winter's sleet,
The mansion still stands, and is heard as of yore
The wind in the trees on the island's shore;
But the restless river its shore line wears
And no longer the island its old name bears.

And years that are gone in obscurity
Have enveloped the rider's memory,
But in Providence still abide her race,
Brave youths with her spirit, fair maids with her grace,
Undaunted they stand when fainter hearts flee,
Prepared whatsoever the emergency.

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Isaac R. Pennypacker.

KIT CARSON'S RIDE.

We lay low in the grass on the broad plain levels,
Old Revels and I, and my stolen brown bride;
And the heavens of blue and the harvest of brown
And beautiful clover were welded as one,
To the right and the left, in the light of the sun.
"Forty full miles if a foot to ride,
Forty full miles if a foot, and the devils

Of red Camanches are hot on the track
When once they strike it. Let the sun go down
Soon, very soon," muttered bearded old Revels
As he peered at the sun, lying low on his back,
Holding fast to his lasso. Then he jerked at his steed
And he sprang to his feet, and glanced swiftly around,
And then dropped, as if shot, with his ear to the ground;
Then again to his feet, and to me, to my bride,
While his eyes were like fire, his face like a shroud,
His form like a king, and his beard like a cloud,
And his voice loud and shrill, as if blown from a reed,—
"Pull, pull in your lassos, and bridle to steed,
And speed you if ever for life you would speed,
And ride for your lives, for your lives you must ride!
For the plain is aflame, the prairie on fire,
And feet of wild horses hard flying before
I hear like a sea breaking high on the shore,
While the buffalo come like a surge of the sea,
Driven far by the flame, driving fast on us three
As a hurricane comes, crushing palms in his ire."

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We drew in the lassos, seized saddle and rein,
Threw them on, sinched them on, sinched them over again,
And again drew the girth, cast aside the macheers,
Cut away tapidaros, loosed the sash from its fold,
Cast aside the catenas red-spangled with gold,
And gold mounted Colt's, the companions of years,
Cast the silken serapes to the wind in a breath,
And so bared to the skin sprang all haste to the horse,—
As bare as when born, as when new from the hand
Of God,—without word, or one word of command.
Turned head to the Brazos in a red race with death,
Turned head to the Brazos with a breath in the hair
Blowing hot from a king leaving death in his course;
Turned head to the Brazos with a sound in the air
Like the rush of an army, and a flash in the eye
Of a red wall of fire reaching up to the sky,
Stretching fierce in pursuit of a black rolling sea
Rushing fast upon us, as the wind sweeping free
And afar from the desert blew hollow and hoarse.

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Not a word, not a wail from a lip was let fall,
Not a kiss from my bride, not a look nor low call
Of love-note or courage; but on o'er the plain
So steady and still, leaning low to the mane,
With the heel to the flank and the hand to the rein,
Rode we on, rode we three, rode we nose and gray nose,
Reaching long, breathing loud, as a creviced wind blows:
Yet we broke not a whisper, we breathed not a prayer,
There was work to be done, there was death in the air,
And the chance was as one to a thousand for all.

Gray nose to gray nose, and each steady mustang
Stretched neck and stretched nerve till the arid earth rang,
And the foam from the flank and the croup and the neck
Flew around like the spray on a storm-driven deck.
Twenty miles!... thirty miles!... a dim distant speck ...
Then a long reaching line, and the Brazos in sight,
And I rose in my seat with a shout of delight.
I stood in my stirrup and looked to my right—
But Revels was gone; I glanced by my shoulder
And saw his horse stagger; I saw his head drooping
Hard down on his breast, and his naked breast stooping
Low down to the mane, as so swifter and bolder
Ran reaching out for us the red-footed fire.
To right and to left the black buffalo came,
A terrible surf on a red sea of flame
Rushing on in the rear, reaching high, reaching higher.
And he rode neck to neck to a buffalo bull,
The monarch of millions, with shaggy mane full
Of smoke and of dust, and it shook with desire
Of battle, with rage and with bellowings loud
And unearthly, and up through its lowering cloud
Came the flash of his eyes like a half-hidden fire,
While his keen crooked horns, through the storm of his mane,

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Like black lances lifted and lifted again;
And I looked but this once, for the fire licked through,
And he fell and was lost, as we rode two and two.

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I looked to my left then,—and nose, neck, and shoulder
Sank slowly, sank surely, till back to my thighs;
And up through the black blowing veil of her hair
Did beam full in mine her two marvelous eyes,
With a longing and love, yet a look of despair
And of pity for me, as she felt the smoke fold her,
And flames reaching far for her glorious hair.
Her sinking steed faltered, his eager ears fell
To and fro and unsteady, and all the neck's swell
Did subside and recede, and the nerves fall as dead.
Then she saw sturdy Paché still lorded his head,
With a look of delight; for nor courage nor bribe,
Nor naught but my bride, could have brought him to me.
For he was her father's, and at South Santafee
Had once won a whole herd, sweeping everything down
In a race where the world came to run for the crown.
And so when I won the true heart of my bride,—
My neighbor's and deadliest enemy's child,
And child of the kingly war-chief of his tribe,—
She brought me this steed to the border the night
She met Revels and me in her perilous flight
From the lodge of the chief to the North Brazos side;
And said, so half guessing of ill as she smiled,
As if jesting, that I, and I only, should ride
The fleet-footed Paché, so if kin should pursue
I should surely escape without other ado
Than to ride, without blood, to the North Brazos side,
And await her,—and wait till the next hollow moon
Hung her horn in the palms, when surely and soon
And swift she would join me, and all would be well
Without bloodshed or word. And now as she fell
From the front, and went down in the ocean of fire,
The last that I saw was a look of delight
That I should escape—a love—a desire—
Yet never a word, not one look of appeal,
Lest I should reach hand, should stay hand or stay heel
One instant for her in my terrible flight.

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Then the rushing of fire around me and under,
And the howling of beasts and a sound as of thunder,—
Beasts burning and blind and forced onward and over,
As the passionate flame reached around them, and wove her
Red hands in their hair, and kissed hot till they died,—
Till they died with a wild and a desolate moan,
As a sea heart-broken on the hard brown stone ...
And into the Brazos ... I rode all alone,—
All alone, save only a horse long-limbed,
And blind and bare and burnt to the skin.
Then just as the terrible sea came in
And tumbled its thousands hot into the tide
Till the tide blocked up and the swift stream brimmed
In eddies, we struck on the opposite side.

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Joaquin Miller.

TAMING THE WILD HORSE.

Last night he trampled with a thousand steeds
The trembling desert. Now, he stands alone—
His speed hath baffled theirs. His fellows lurk,
Behind, on heavy sands, with weary limbs
That cannot reach him. From the highest hill,
He gazes o'er the wild whose plains he spurned,
And his eye kindles, and his breast expands,
With an upheaving consciousness of might.
He stands an instant, then he breaks away,
As revelling in his freedom. What if art,
That strikes soul into marble, could but seize

That agony of action,—could impress
Its muscular fulness, with its winged haste,
Upon the resisting rock, while wonder stares,
And admiration worships? There,—away—
As glorying in that mighty wilderness,
And conscious of the gazing skies o'erhead,
Quiver for flight, his sleek and slender limbs,
Elastic, springing into headlong force—
While his smooth neck, curved loftily to arch,
Dignifies flight, and to his speed imparts
The majesty, not else its attribute.
And, circling, now he sweeps, the flowery plain,
As if 'twere his—imperious, gathering up
His limbs, unwearied by their sportive play,
Until he stands, an idol of the sight.

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He stands and trembles! The warm life is gone
That gave him action. Wherefore is it thus?
His eye hath lost its lustre, though it still
Sends forth a glance of consciousness and care,
To a deep agony of acuteness wrought,
And straining at a point—a narrow point—
That rises, but a speck upon the verge
Of the horizon. Sure, the humblest life,
Hath, in God's providence, some gracious guides,
That warn it of its foe. The danger there,
His instinct teaches, and with growing dread,
No more solicitous of graceful flight,
He bounds across the plain—he speeds away,
Into the tameless wilderness afar,
To 'scape his bondage. Yet, in vain his flight—
Vain his fleet limbs, his desperate aim, his leap
Through the close thicket, through the festering swamp,
And rushing waters. His proud neck must bend
Beneath a halter, and the iron parts
And tears his delicate mouth. The brave steed,
Late bounding in his freedom's consciousness,
The leader of the wild, unreached of all,
Wears gaudy trappings, and becomes a slave.

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He bears a master on his shrinking back,
He feels a rowel in his bleeding flanks,
And his arched neck, beneath the biting thong,
Burns, while he bounds away—all desperate—
Across the desert, mad with the vain hope
To shake his burden off. He writhes, he turns
On his oppressor. He would rend the foe,
Who subtle, with less strength, had taken him thus,
At foul advantage—but he strives in vain.
A sudden pang—a newer form of pain,
Baffles, and bears him on—he feels his fate,
And with a shriek of agony, which tells,
Loudly, the terrors of his new estate,
He makes the desert—his own desert—ring
With the wild clamors of his new born grief.
One fruitless effort more—one desperate bound,
For the old freedom of his natural life,
And then he humbles to his cruel lot,
Submits, and finds his conqueror in man!

W. G. Simms.

CHIQUITA.

Beautiful! Sir, you may say so. Thar isn't her match in the county.
Is thar, old gal,—Chiquita, my darling, my beauty?
Feel of that neck, sir,—thar's velvet! Whoa! Steady,—ah,
will you, you vixen!
Whoa! I say. Jack, trot her out; let the gentleman look at her paces.

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Morgan!—She ain't nothin' else, and I've got the papers to prove it.
Sired by Chippewa Chief, and twelve hundred dollars won't buy her.

Briggs of Tuolumne owned her. Did you know Briggs of Tuolumne?—
Busted hisself in White Pine, and blew out his brains down in 'Frisco?

Hedn't no savey—hed Briggs. Thar, Jack! that'll do,—quit that foolin'!
Nothin' to what she kin do, when she's got her work cut out before her.
Hosses is hosses, you know, and likewise, too, jockeys is jockeys;
And 'tain't ev'ry man as can ride as knows what a hoss has got in him.

Know the old ford on the Fork, that nearly got Flanigan's leaders?
Nasty in daylight, you bet, and a mighty rough ford in low water!
Well, it ain't six weeks ago that me and the Jedge and his nevey
Struck for that ford in the night, in the rain, and the water all round us;

Up to our flanks in the gulch, and Rattlesnake Creek just a bilin',
Not a plank left in the dam, and nary a bridge on the river.
I had the grey, and the Jedge had his roan, and his nevey, Chiquita;
And after us trundled the rocks jest loosed from the top of the cañon.

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Lickity, lickity, switch, we came to the ford, and Chiquita
Buckled right down to her work, and afore I could yell to her rider,
Took water jest at the ford, and there was the Jedge and me standing,
And twelve hundred dollars of hoss-flesh afloat and a driftin' to thunder!

Would ye b'lieve it? that night that hoss, that ar' filly, Chiquita,
Walked herself into her stall, and stood there, all quiet and dripping:
Clean as a beaver or rat, with nary a buckle of harness,
Just as she swam the Fork,—that hoss, that ar' filly, Chiquita.

That's what I call a hoss! and—What did you say!—Oh, the nevey?
Drowned, I reckon,—leastways, he never kem back to deny it.
Ye see the derved fool had no seat,—ye couldn't have made him a rider;
And then, ye know, boys will be boys, and hosses—well, hosses is hosses!

Bret Harte.

BAY BILLY.

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'Twas the last fight at Fredericksburg,—
Perhaps the day you reck,
Our boys, the Twenty-Second Maine,
Kept Early's men in check.
Just where Wade Hampton boomed away
The fight went neck and neck.

All day the weaker wing we held,
And held it with a will.
Five several stubborn times we charged
The battery on the hill,
And five times beaten back, re-formed,
And kept our column still.

At last from out the centre fight
Spurred up a General's Aid.
"That battery must silenced be!"
He cried, as past he sped.
Our Colonel simply touched his cap,
And then, with measured tread,

To lead the crouching line once more
The grand old fellow came.
No wounded man but raised his head
And strove to gasp his name,
And those who could not speak nor stir,
"God blessed him" just the same.

For he was all the world to us,
That hero gray and grim.
Right well he knew that fearful slope
We'd climb with none but him,
Though while his white head led the way
We'd charge hell's portals in.

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This time we were not half-way up,

When, midst the storm of shell,
Our leader, with his sword upraised,
Beneath our bayonets fell.
And, as we bore him back, the foe
Set up a joyous yell.

Our hearts went with him. Back we swept,
And when the bugle said
"Up, charge, again!" no man was there
But hung his dogged head.
"We've no one left to lead us now,"
The sullen soldiers said.

Just then before the laggard line
The Colonel's horse we spied,
Bay Billy with his trappings on,
His nostrils swelling wide,
As though still on his gallant back
The master sat astride.

Right royally he took the place
That was of old his wont,
And with a neigh that seemed to say,
Above the battle's brunt,
"How can the Twenty-second charge
If I am not in front?"

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Like statues rooted there we stood,
And gazed a little space,
Above that floating mane we missed
The dear familiar face,
But we saw Bay Billy's eye of fire,
And it gave us heart of grace.

No bugle-call could rouse us all
As that brave sight had done.
Down all the battered line we felt
A lightning impulse run.
Up! up! the hill we followed Bill,
And we captured every gun!

And when upon the conquered height
Died out the battle's hum.
Vainly mid living and the dead
We sought our leader dumb.
It seemed as if a spectre steed
To win that day had come.

And then the dusk and dew of night
Fell softly o'er the plain,
As though o'er man's dread work of death
The angels wept again,
And drew night's curtain gently round
A thousand beds of pain.

All night the surgeons' torches went,
The ghastly rows between.—
All night with solemn step I paced
The torn and bloody green.
But who that fought in the big war
Such dread sights have not seen?

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At last the morning broke. The lark
Sang in the merry skies
As if to e'en the sleepers there
It bade awake, and rise!
Though naught but that last trump of all
Could ope their heavy eyes.

And then once more with banners gay,
Stretched out the long Brigade.
Trimly upon the furrowed field
The troops stood on parade,
And bravely mid the ranks were closed
The gaps the fight had made.

Not half the Twenty-second's men
Were in their place that morn,
And Corporal Dick, who yester-noon
Stood six brave fellows on,
Now touched my elbow in the ranks,
For all between were gone.

Ah! who forgets that dreary hour
When, as with misty eyes,
To call the old familiar roll
The solemn Sergeant tries,—
One feels that thumping of the heart
As no prompt voice replies.

And as in faltering tone and slow
The last few names were said,
Across the field some missing horse
Toiled up with weary tread,
It caught the Sergeant's eye, and quick
Bay Billy's name he read.

Yes! there the old bay hero stood,
All safe from battle's harms,
And ere an order could be heard,
Or the bugle's quick alarms,
Down all the front, from end to end,
The troops presented arms!

Not all the shoulder-straps on earth
Could still our mighty cheer;
And ever from that famous day,
When rang the roll-call clear,
Bay Billy's name was read, and then
The whole line answered, "Here!"

Frank H. Gassaway.

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WIDDERIN'S RACE.

A horse amongst ten thousand! on the verge,
The extremest verge, of equine life he stands;
Yet mark his action, as those wild young colts
Freed from the stock-yard gallop whinnying up;
See how he trots towards them,—nose in air,
Tail arched, and his still sinewy legs out-thrown
In gallant grace before him! A brave beast
As ever spurned the moorland, ay, and more,—
He bore me once,—such words but smite the truth
I' the outer ring, while vivid memory wakes,
Recalling now, the passion and the pain,—
He bore me once from earthly Hell to Heaven!

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The sight of fine old Widderin (that's his name,
Caught from a peak, the topmost rugged peak
Of tall Mount Widderin, towering to the North
Most like a steed's head, with full nostrils blown,
And ears pricked up),—the sight of Widderin brings
That day of days before me, whose strange hours
Of fear and anguish, ere the sunset, changed
To hours of such content and full-veined joy
As Heaven can give our mortal lives but once.

Well, here's the story: While yon bush-fires sweep
The distant ranges, and the river's voice
Pipes a thin treble through the heart of drouth,
While the red heaven like some hugh caldron's top
Seems with the heat a-simmering, better far
In place of riding tilt 'gainst such a sun,
Here in the safe veranda's flowery gloom,
To play the dwarfish Homer to a song,
Whereof myself am hero:

Have passed since that wild autumn-time when last
The convict hordes from near Van Diemen, freed
By force or fraud, swept, like a blood-red fire,
Inland from beach to mountain, bent on raid
And rapine.

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......*...*

So, in late autumn,—'twas a marvellous morn,
With breezes from the calm snow-river borne
That touched the air, and stirred it into thrills,
Mysterious and mesmeric, a bright mist
Lapping the landscape like a golden trance,
Swathing the hill-tops with fantastic veils,
And o'er the moorland-ocean quivering light
As gossamer threads drawn down the forest aisles
At dewy dawning,—on this marvellous morn,
I, with four comrades, in this selfsame spot,
Watched the fair scene, and drank the spicy airs,
That held a subtler spirit than our wine,
And talked and laughed, and mused in idleness,—
Weaving vague fancies, as our pipe-wreaths curled
Fantastic in the sunlight! I, with head
Thrown back, and cushioned snugly, and with eyes
Intent on one grotesque and curious cloud,
Puffed upward, that now seemed to take the shape
Of a Dutch tulip, now a Turk's face topped
By folds on folds of turban limitless,—
Heard suddenly, just as the clock chimed one,
To melt in musical echoes up the hills,
Quick footsteps on the gravelled path without,—
Steps of the couriers of calamity,—
So my heart told me,—ere with blanched regards,
Two stalwart herdsmen on our threshold paused,
Panting, with lips that writhed, and awful eyes;—
A breath's space in each other's eyes we glared,
Then, swift as interchange of lightning thrusts
In deadly combat, question and reply
Clashed sharply, "What! the Rangers?" "Ay, by Heaven!
And loosed in force,—the hell-hounds!" "Whither bound?"
I stammered, hoarsely. "Bound," the elder said,
"Southward!—four stations had they sacked and burnt,
And now, drunk, furious"—But I stopped to hear
No more: with booming thunder in mine ears,
And blood-flushed eyes, I rushed to Widderin's side,
Drew tight the girths, upgathered curb and rein,
And sprang to horse ere yet our laggard friends—
Now trooping from the green veranda's shade—
Could dream of action!

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Love had winged my will,
For to the southward fair Garoopna held
My all of hope, life, passion; she whose hair
(Its tiniest strand of waving, witch-like gold)
Had caught my heart, entwined, and bound it fast,
As 'twere some sweet enchantment's heavenly net!

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I only gave a hand-wave in farewell,
Shot by, and o'er the endless moorland swept
(Endless it seemed, as those weird, measureless plains,
Which, in some nightmare vision, stretch and stretch
Towards infinity!) like some lone ship
O'er wastes of sailless waters: now, a pine,
The beacon pine gigantic, whose grim crown
Signals the far land-mariner from out
Gaunt boulders of the gray-backed Organ hill,
Rose on my sight, a mist-like, wavering orb,
The while, still onward, onward, onward still,
With motion winged, elastic, equable,
Brave Widderin cleaved the air-tides, tossed aside
The winds as waves, their swift, invisible breasts
Hissing with foam-like noise when pressed and pierced
By that keen head and fiery-crested form!

The lonely shepherd guardian on the plains,

Watching his sheep through languid, half-shut eyes,
Looked up, and marvelled, as we passed him by,
Thinking, perchance, it was a glorious thing,
So dressed, so booted, so caparisoned,
To ride such bright blood-coursers unto death!
Two sun-blacked natives, slumbering in the grass,
Just rose betimes to 'scape the trampling hoofs,
And hurled hot curses at me as I sped;
While here and there the timid kangaroo
Blundered athwart the mole-hills, and in puffs
Of steamy dust-cloud vanished like a mote!

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Onward, still onward, onward, onward still!
And lo! thank Heaven, the mighty Organ hill,
That seemed a dim blue cloudlet at the start,
Hangs in aerial, fluted cliffs aloft,—
And still as through the long, low glacis borne,
Beneath the gorge borne ever at wild speed,
I saw the mateless mountain eagle wheel
Beyond the stark height's topmost pinnacle;
I heard his shriek of rage and ravin die
Deep down the desolate dells, as far behind
I left the gorge, and far before me swept
Another plain, tree-bordered now, and bound
By the clear river gurgling o'er its bed.

By this, my panting, but unconquered steed
Had thrown his small head backward, and his breath
Through the red nostrils burst in labored sighs;
I bent above his outstretched neck, I threw
My quivering arms about him, murmuring low,
"Good horse! brave heart! a little longer bear
The strain, the travail; and thenceforth for thee
Free pastures all thy days, till death shall come!
Ah, many and many a time, my noble bay,
Her lily hand hath wandered through thy mane,
Patted thy rainbow neck, and brought thee ears
Of daintiest corn from out the farmhouse loft,—
Help, help to save her now!"

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I'll vow the brute
Heard me, and comprehended what he heard!
He shook his proud crest madly, and his eye
Turned for a moment sideways, flashed in mine
A lightning gleam, whose fiery language said,
"I know my lineage, will not shame my sire,—
My sire, who rushed triumphant 'twixt the flags,
And frenzied thousands, when on Epsom downs
Arcturus won the Derby!—no, nor shame
My granddam, whose clean body, half enwrought
Of air, half fire, through swirls of desert sand
Bore Sheik Abdallah headlong on his prey!"

At last came forest shadows, and the road
Winding through bush and bracken, and at last
The hoarse stream rumbling o'er its quartz-sown crags.

"No, no! stanch Widderin! pause not now to drink;
An hour hence, and thy dainty nose shall dip
In richest wine, poured jubilantly forth
To quench thy thirst, my Beauty! but press on,
Nor heed these sparkling waters." God! my brain's
On fire once more! an instant tells me all;
All! life or death,—salvation or despair!
For yonder, o'er the wild grass-matted slope
The house stands, or it stood but yesterday.

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A Titan cry of inarticulate joy
I raised, as, calm and peaceful in the sun,
Shone the fair cottage, and the garden-close,
Wherein, white-robed, unconscious, sat my Love
Lilting a low song to the birds and flowers.
She heard the hoof-strokes, saw me, started up,
And with her blue eyes wider than their wont,
And rosy lips half tremulous, rushed to meet
And greet me swiftly. "Up, dear Love!" I cried,

"The Convicts, the Bush-rangers! let us fly!"
Ah, then and there you should have seen her, friend,
My noble, beauteous Helen! not a tear,
Nor sob, and scarce a transient pulse-quiver,
As, clasping hand in hand, her fairy foot
Lit like a small bird on my horseman's boot,
And up into the saddle, lithe and light,
Vaulting she perched, her bright curls round my face!

We crossed the river, and, dismounting, led
O'er the steep slope of blended rock and turf
The wearied horse, and there behind a Tor
Of castellated bluestone, paused to sweep
With young keen eyes the broad plain stretched afar,
Serene and autumn-tinted at our feet:
"Either," said I, "these devils have gone east,
To meet with bloodhound Desborough in his rage
Between the granite passes of Luxorme,
Or else—dear Christ! my Helen, low! stoop low!"
(These words were hissed in horror, for just then,
'Twixt the deep hollows of the river-vale,
The miscreants, with mixed shouts and curses, poured
Down through the flinty gorge tumultuously,
Seeming, we thought, in one fierce throng to charge
Our hiding-place.) I seized my Widderin's head,
Blindfolding him, for with a single neigh
Our fate were sealed o' the instant! As they rode,
Those wild, foul-languaged demons by our lair,
Scarce twelve yards off, my troubled steed shook wide
His streaming mane, stamped on the earth, and pawed
So loudly, that the sweat of agony rolled
Down my cold forehead; at which point I felt
My arm clutched, and a voice I did not know
Dropped the low murmur from pale, shuddering lips,
"O God! if in those brutal hands I fall,
Living, look not into your mother's face
Or any woman's more!"

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What time had passed
Above our bowed heads, we pent, pinioned there
By awe and nameless horror, who shall tell?
Minutes, perchance, by mortal measurement,
Eternity by heart-throbs!—when at length
We turned, and eyes of mutual wonder raised,
We gazed on alien faces, haggard, worn,
And strange of feature as the faces born
In fever and delirium! Were we saved?
We scarce could comprehend it, till from out
The neighboring oak-wood rode our friends at speed,
With clang of steel, and eyebrows bent in wrath.
But, warned betimes, the wily ruffians fled
Far up the forest-coverts, and beyond
The dazzling snow-line of the distant hills,
Their yells of fiendish laughter pealing faint
And fainter from the cloudland, and the mist
That closed about them like an ash-gray shroud:
Yet were these wretches marked for imminent death:
The next keen sunrise pierced the savage gorge,
To which we tracked them, where, mere beasts at bay,
Grimly they fought, and brute by brute they fell.

Paul Hamilton Hayne.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN.

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SHOWING HOW HE WENT FARTHER THAN HE INTENDED, AND CAME
SAFE HOME AGAIN.

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was he
Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
No holiday have seen.

"To morrow is our wedding-day,
And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton
All in a chaise and pair.

"My sister, and my sister's child,
Myself, and children three,
Will fill the chaise; so you must ride
On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest dear,
Therefore it shall be done.

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"I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender
Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnished with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kissed his loving wife;
O'erjoyed was he to find,
That, though on pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stayed,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folks so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath,
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,
And up he got, in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

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For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs,
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,

To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,
And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

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Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long-red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which galled him in his seat.

"So, fair and softly," John he cried,
But John he cried in vain;
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both his hands,
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,
What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or naught;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

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The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
The bottles he had slung;
A bottle swinging at each side,
As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Up flew the windows all;
And every soul cried out, "Well done!"
As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin,—who but he?
His fame soon spread around,
"He carries weight! he rides a race!
'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still as fast as he drew near,
'Twas wonderful to view,
How in a trice the turnpike men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head fell low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shattered at a blow.

[Pg 179]

Down ran the wine into the road,
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols did he play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house,"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired."
Said Gilpin, "So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there;
For why?—his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

[Pg 180]

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly,—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbor in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:

"What news? what news? your tidings tell;
Tell me you must and shall.—
Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke:

"I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forbode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road."

[Pg 181]

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Returned him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

Whence straight he came with hat and wig;
A wig that flowed behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus showed his ready wit,
"My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

"But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;

And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding-day,
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast!
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear;

[Pg 182]

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pulled out half a crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain;
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
By catching at his rein,

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

[Pg 183]

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry:—

"Stop thief! stop thief!—a highwayman!"
Not one of them was mute;
And all and each that passed that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike-gates again
Flew open in short space;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too,
For he got first to town;
Nor stopped till where he had got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, "Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see!"

REFLECTIONS OF A PROUD PEDESTRIAN.

[Pg 184]

I saw the curl of his waving lash,
And the glance of his knowing eye,
And I knew that he thought he was cutting a dash,
As his steed went thundering by.

And he may ride in the rattling gig,
Or flourish the Stanhope gay,
And dream that he looks exceeding big
To the people that walk in the way;

But he shall think, when the night is still,
On the stable-boy's gathering numbers,
And the ghost of many a veteran bill
Shall hover around his slumbers;

The ghastly dun shall worry his sleep,
And constables cluster around him,
And he shall creep from the wood-hole deep
Where their spectre eyes have found him!

Ay! gather your reins, and crack your thong,
And bid your steed go faster;
He does not know, as he scrambles along,
That he has a fool for his master;

[Pg 185]

And hurry away on your lonely ride,
Nor deign from the mire to save me;
I will paddle it stoutly at your side
With the tandem that nature gave me!

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

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