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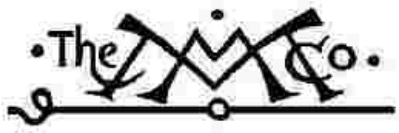

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TORONTO

ENGLISH NARRATIVE POEMS

SELECTED AND EDITED
BY

CLAUDE M. FUESS

AND

HENRY N. SANBORN

INSTRUCTORS IN ENGLISH IN PHILLIPS ACADEMY
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INTRODUCTION

Narrative poetry is distinguished from other types of verse in that it aims to relate a connected series of events and, therefore, deals primarily with actions, rather than with thoughts or emotions. This definition, however, simple as it appears to be in theory, is often difficult to apply as a test because other matter is blended with the pure narrative. In any story where the situation is made prominent, description may be required to make clear the scene and explain movements to the reader; thus *Enoch Arden* begins with a word picture of a sea-coast town. Again it is often necessary to analyze the motives which actuate certain characters, and so it becomes necessary to introduce exposition of some sort into the plot. The poems in this collection serve to enforce the lesson that the four standard rhetorical forms—narration, description, exposition, and argumentation—are constantly being combined and welded in a complicated way. In cases where these various literary elements are apparently in a tangle, a classification, if it be made at all, must be based on the design of the poem as a whole, and the emphasis and proportion given to the respective elements by the author. If the stress is laid on the recounting of the events which make up a unified action, and if the other factors are made subordinate and
[Pg x] subsidiary to this end, then the poem in question belongs to the narrative group.

The antiquity of the narrative as a form of literature is undisputed. Indeed it has been established with a reasonable degree of certainty that poetry in its very beginnings was narrative and in its primitive state must have been a sort of rude, rhythmical chant, originated and participated in by the tribe as a whole, and telling of the exploits of gods or legendary heroes. In the course of time there arose the *minstrel*, who, acting first as chorus leader, became eventually the representative of the tribe and its own special singer. When we reach a somewhat more advanced stage of civilization, we find regularly appointed bards reciting their lays in the hall of the chieftain or urging on the warriors to battle with rehearsals of past victories. Originally these bards simply repeated the old oral traditions handed down as common property, but the opportunity for the display of individual genius soon induced them to try variations on the current themes and to compose versions of their own. With this advance of individualism, poetry became gradually more complex. Various elements, lyrical, descriptive, and dramatic, assumed some prominence and tended to develop separate forms. This differentiation, however, did not impair the vigor of the story-telling spirit, and a constant succession of narrative poems down to the present day evidences how productive and characteristic a feature of our literature this form has been.

Obviously it is impracticable to undertake here even a brief summary of the history of English narrative poetry and of the influences to which it has been responsive. Something may,
[Pg xi] nevertheless, be done to map out roughly a few divisions which may be of assistance in bringing this material into orderly shape for the student. Many efforts at systematic classification have been made, and a few fairly well-marked types have been defined. In spite of this fact, the task still presents insuperable obstacles over which there has been futile controversy. One type is likely to run into another in a way which is uncomfortably baffling. Then there are numerous nondescript works whose proper place seems determinable by no law of poetics. The fact is that, here at least, narrow distinctions are bound to be unsatisfactory. The critic finds it imperative to avoid dogmatism lest he lay himself open to attack; his only refuge is in the general statement which may be suggestive even if it is not exact.

Of the fixed types, two of the best known, the *Epic* and the *Ballad*, were among the earliest to be created. The Epic in its original form was a long poem of uniform metre, serious in tone and elevated in style, introducing supernatural or heroic characters and usually dealing with some significant event in racial or national history. In its first or primitive shape it was anonymous, a spontaneous outgrowth of popular feeling, though perhaps arranged and revised at a later date by some conscious artistic hand. Such a primitive Epic is the old English *Beowulf*: it is thoroughly objective; in it no clew to definite authorship can be detected; in it personality is buried in the rush of incident and the clash of action. When, with the broadening of the scope of poetry, the individual writer displaced the tribe as the preserver of folk-lore, the new order of things evolved
[Pg xii] the so-called artificial Epic as represented by Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Here the conventional Epic style and material is kept; the universe is the stage, and the figures upon it are imposing and grand; but behind the poem is a single personality whose mood colors and modifies the whole. The Epic is no longer entirely racial or national, but individual; and we have the introduction of such passages as Milton's reference to his own blindness in Book Three.

Akin to the Epic is the Mock Epic, which appropriates the Epic machinery and Epic style to use them in dealing with trivialities. In Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, the most artistic Mock Epic in

English, the theft of a single lock of hair becomes an act of national and supernatural interest and a game of cards is described as if it were a mighty battle.

Almost parallel with and closely resembling the development of the Epic is that of the *Ballad*. Like the primitive Epic in anonymity and impersonality, the Ballad was much shorter, had rime and stanzas, and dealt, as a rule, with incidents of less importance. Not so formal or pretentious as the Epic, it was easily memorized even by the peasant, and handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Favorite subjects were the legends of Robin Hood, the misfortunes of nobles, and the incidents of Border warfare. Mixed in many of them was a tendency toward superstition, a survival of the belief in ghosts, magicians, and talking animals. Numerous examples gathered by antiquaries may be found in the edition of old English Ballads in this series; among the better known are *The Wife of Usher's Well* and *Chevy Chase*. Later poets naturally adapted the Ballad form to their own uses, and so we have the artificial Ballad,
[Pg xiii] illustrated by Cowper's *The History of John Gilpin*, Longfellow's *The Wreck of the Hesperus*, and Swinburne's *May Janet*. In these poems many of the trite expressions so peculiar to the primitive Ballad are retained; but, like the artificial Epic, the work is no longer communal, but individual, in origin and bears the stamp of one mind animated by an artistic purpose.

In discussing the Epic and the Ballad one is on fairly safe ground, but between these types one finds a vast amount of poetry, evidently narrative, which suggests perplexing problems. Much of it may be made to come under what we term loosely the *Metrical Romance*. This title is often narrowed by scholars to apply strictly to a poetical *genre*, arising in the Middle Ages and brought into England by the Norman-French, which deals in a rambling way with the marvellous adventures of wandering knights or heroes. Its plot, in which love and combat are conspicuous features, is enveloped in a kind of glamour, an atmosphere of unreality. It drew its material from many diverse sources: from the legends of Troy and the stories of classical and Oriental antiquity; from the tales of the Frankish Emperor Charlemagne and his paladins; from the Celtic accounts of King Arthur and the Table Round. Since its characters, sometimes not without anachronism, embodied the chivalric ideals of courtesy and loyalty to ladies, hatred of paganism, and general conduct according to a prescribed but unwritten code, its appeal was made for the most part to the courtier and the aristocrat,—though it must be added that many of the robuster Charlemagne romances acquired currency with the humbler classes and were sung in the cottage of the
[Pg xiv] peasant. The fact that the greater number of these Metrical Romances were mere redactions, taken from foreign models, makes them seem deficient in English interest. Still, several of the best were of native composition, an excellent example being the well-known *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*.

But even in spite of a few slight advantages to be gained, it seems unwise to restrict the Metrical Romance too closely. What we are accustomed to call, rather vaguely, romance is a persistent quality in narrative poetry, and is not limited to the literature of any particular age or rank of society. A cursory examination will disclose many evidences of the romantic spirit in both the Epic and the Ballad. And certainly Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Keats's *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Longfellow's *Evangeline*, and many other poems on similar themes must remain unclassified unless we designate them broadly as Metrical Romances. Of course, it is not essential that they should be pigeon-holed and put away with the right label affixed. However, one or two observations on the subject-matter with which works of this nature deal may assist us in avoiding embarrassing confusion. Sometimes the Metrical Romance (using the term in its broader sense) deals with authenticated incidents of history. In such cases, the narrative, founded as it is on matters of fact, is compelled to preserve substantial accuracy with regard to the events which it uses for a structure. The fancy is thus partly curbed through the necessity of not departing radically from the truth. This restraint, logically enough, does not prevent the introduction of fictitious characters or episodes; but in the strict historical poem, as in the historical novel, it does require adherence to chronology and a just representation of the period
[Pg xv] in which the action takes place. Occasionally this form approaches a poetical paraphrase, as in Rossetti's *The White Ship*. The nineteenth century was singularly prolific in works of this sort; notable among such works are Scott's *Marmion*, Tennyson's *The Revenge*, and Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride*. If the basis of the poem is mythological, we have a further species of the Metrical Romance. The stories clustered around the gods and goddesses of unsophisticated peoples are perennially attractive and offer a fruitful field to the poet. In the setting there is frequent opportunity for elaborate description, and there is often, as in Tennyson's *Œnone* and William Morris's *Atalanta's Race*, ornamentation used by the author that is more than ordinarily remarkable. For such poetry the Greek and Latin writers furnish a wealth of material for imitation. Nor have the myths of other races been neglected in recent years. Matthew Arnold's *Balder Dead* has its inspiration in the Norse *Eddas* and has its opening scene in Valhalla where Odin, father of the gods, presides over the immortals. William Morris's *Sigurd the Volsing* is an adaptation of the myths of the early Germans.

It is not aside from the point to refer here to the few poems in which the subject-matter of the Metrical Romance is used, strangely enough, as a means of teaching moral ideas. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* presents such an anomaly. In it conventional chivalric heroes undergo surprising and impossible adventures, battling and loving as in the legends of Charlemagne and Arthur. Indeed, in the *Faerie Queene*, Arthur himself appears as the protagonist. But these knights and ladies are, we learn, merely animated vices and virtues and are such, because, as Spenser takes
[Pg xvi] pains to tell us, the poem, though romantic in mood, is allegorical in intention, its aim being "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline." The author in using his characters as agents of moral instruction creates a type as much by itself as *Pilgrim's Progress* is in prose. Modern examples less conspicuous for visible allegorical intention are Tennyson's *Idylls*

of the King, in which Arthurian material is once more revived with something of an ethical purpose.

There is still to be taken up a large body of poems, usually, though not always, shorter than the Metrical Romances, which deal with the situations of common life and with the humbler members of society. By some authorities the term Metrical Tale has been applied to such compositions; though it is hardly exact or specific, since the word "tale" is usually made synonymous with "story" and therefore does not connote a limited subject-matter. We may accept it in a provisional way as a convenient technical term for our purposes. The Metrical Tale, then, as contrasted with the Metrical Romance, attempts a realistic portrayal of the natural sorrows, losses, or pains which belong to our everyday experience. The emotions of which it treats are fundamentally strong and keep the style and versification from becoming overelaborated. The Metrical Tale may be humorous as in Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale*, or may be pathetic and tragic as in Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* or Wordsworth's *Michael*. In these poems it will be observed that the diction and phraseology are exceedingly simple. But here, too, candor requires the admission that the alleged
[Pg xvii] difference between the Romance and the Tale is likely to bring on a charge of inconsistency. *Enoch Arden*, just now mentioned, abounds in romantic episodes, though Enoch and Philip and Annie dwell in a little fishing village. Why, if Chaucer chose to call his masterpiece the *Canterbury Tales*, should any one take the liberty of questioning his nomenclature? The query is well founded; and yet the reader must recognize a wide gulf in tone and spirit between *The Knight's Tale* and *The Reeve's Tale*. Call it, if you will, the distinction between idealism and realism; at any rate it exists, and ought to be made plain even at the risk of confronting dilemmas of another sort.

Having a kind of relationship to what we call arbitrarily the Metrical Tale is the Beast Fable in verse, in which animals and birds are endowed with reason and speech. The excuse for the Beast Fable is an ethical one, and the story, often humorous, is merely a vehicle for instruction,—a fact evident enough from the so-called moral appended to most Beast Fables. The best Beast Fables in English are those of John Gay.

It is beyond the scope of this introduction to make any but a passing reference to the forms of versification which have been used in narrative poetry. In general, the range of metres is wide and varied, though a few common lines and stanzas occur with much frequency. Blank Verse, a favorite Epic measure used by Milton in *Paradise Lost*, has also been effective in the Metrical Romance (Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*) and the Metrical Tale (Wordsworth's *Michael*). It is peculiarly fitting to longer poems of a serious character. The Heroic Couplet, made up of two rimed iambic pentameters, was invented by Chaucer and tried in many of the *Canterbury Tales*.
[Pg xviii] It has since become very common, being the measure of such widely different poems as Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, and Keats's *Lamia*. Octosyllabic verse is frequently found,—sometimes in rimed couplets as in Scott's *Marmion*, less often unrimed as in Longfellow's *Hiawatha*. In the couplet form it is especially suited to war poetry where a rapid movement is desirable. The standard four-lined ballad stanza with rimed alternate lines has continued in popularity with the artificial ballad writers and has been used in such poems as Wordsworth's *Lucy Gray* and Longfellow's *The Wreck of the Hesperus*. Most complicated of all the narrative stanzaic forms is the Spenserian stanza, devised by Spenser for his *Faerie Queene* and imitated by Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*. It has a stateliness which makes it well adapted to dignified themes. In some few examples there is a metre wholly irregular and following the movement of the story, as in Tennyson's *The Revenge* and Browning's *Hervé Riel*.

The discussion of narrative methods may be left to the will and discretion of the teacher. A study of the separate poems here presented will show that while the four almost indispensable elements of narration—plot, setting, characters, and motive—may usually be found, their use and emphasis vary greatly according to the theories and personalities of the authors. The employment of such arts of construction as suspense and climax may be discovered by the individual student, who should also test each poem for its unity, coherence, and proportion. In a collection such as this there is ample room for instructive criticism and comparison. But narrative
[Pg xix] poems may well be read for the interest they excite. If a narrative poem fails in this respect, it is all but condemned from the start. It is hoped that these examples may show the student that *poetry* is not always dull and lifeless; that it may possess at times all the features which make literature attractive as well as inspiring.

The editors are grateful for assistance rendered them by Mr. A. W. Leonard and Mr. Archibald Freeman, both instructors in Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

[Pg 1]

WILLIAM COWPER

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

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

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke[1] 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[2]
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.[3]"

[Pg 2]

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

"I am a linendraper bold,
As all the world doth know,
And my good friend the calender[4]
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 kiss'd 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 allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd,
Where they did all get in;
Six precious souls, and all agog[5]
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[6] were mad.

[Pg 3]

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;

For saddletree[7] scarce reach'd 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.

[Pg 4]

Then over all, that he might be
Equipp'd from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd 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 gall'd 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 grasp'd 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 nought;
Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
Of running such a rig.

[Pg 5]

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 scream'd,
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 [8]!
'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 full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

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.

[Pg 6]

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

Thus all through merry Islington[9]
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.[10]

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.

[Pg 7]

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."

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,[11]
Return'd him not a single word,
But to the house went in;

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

[Pg 8]

He held them up, and in his turn
Thus show'd 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;

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd 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.

[Pg 9]

Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down
Into the country far away,
She pull'd 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[12];
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 frighted steed he frighted more,
And made him faster run.

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[13]:—

"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.

[Pg 10]

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 stopp'd 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!

[Pg 11]

ROBERT BURNS

TAM O' SHANTER

"Of brownyis and of bogilis full is this buke."
GAWIN DOUGLAS.

A TALE

When chapman billies[14] leave the street,
And drouty[15] neebors, neebors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate[16];
While we sit bousing at the nappy,[17]
And gettin' fou[18] and unco[19] happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles.
The mosses, waters, slaps[20] and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where 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[21] Ayr[22] ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonny 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,[23]
A blethering,[24] blustering, drunken blellum[25];
[Pg 12]
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou wasna sober;
That ilka[26] melder,[27] wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That every naig was ca'd[28] 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,[29]
Or catched wi' warlocks[30] in the mirk,[31]
By Alloway's[32] auld haunted kirk.[33]

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,[34]
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthened sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted[35] unco right,
Fast by an ingle,[36] bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats,[37] that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter[38] 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 aye 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;
[Pg 13]
The storm without might rair and rustle—
Tam did na 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 blest, 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 snowfall 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[39] ride:
That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
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[40] had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
(A better never lifted leg,)
[Pg 14]
Tam skelpit[41] on through dub[42] 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[43] catch him unawares:—
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets[44] nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoored[45];
And past the birks[46] and meikle stane,[47]
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And through the whins,[48] and by the cairn,[49]
Where hunters fand the murdered bairn[50];
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where 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 through the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze[51];
Through ilka bore[52] the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,[53]
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae,[54] we'll face the devil!—
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.[55]
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
[Pg 15]
She ventured forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent[56] new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys,[57] and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker[58] in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;

A towzie tyke,[59] black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screwed the pipes and gart them skirl,[60]
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.[61]
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shawed the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip slight[62]
Each in its cauld hand held a light:
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee unchristened bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae the rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab[63] did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scimitars, 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:
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'!

As Tammie glow'red, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
[Pg 16] The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,[64]
Till ilka carlin[65] swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies[66] to the wark,
And linket[67] at it in her sark[68]!

Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,[69]
A' plump and strappin' in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,[70]
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen[71]!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,[72]
For ae blink o' the bonny burdies[73]!
But withered beldams,[74] auld and droll
Rigwooddie[75] hags wad spean[76] a foal,
Louping and flinging on a cummock,[77]
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenned what was what fu' brawlie[78];
There was ae winsome wench and walie,[79]
That night enlisted in the core,[80]
(Lang after kenned on Carrick shore;
For monie a beast to dead she shot,
And perished monie a bonny boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,[81]
And kept the country-side in fear.)
Her cutty-sark,[82] o' Paisley harn,[83]
That while a lassie she had won,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.[84]
[Pg 17] Ah! little kenned thy reverend grannie
That sark she coft[85] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance o' witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power;—
To sing how Nannie lap and flang[86]
(A souple jade she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitched,
And thought his very e'en[87] enriched:
Even Satan glow'red and fidged fu' fain,[88]

And hotched[89] and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne[90] anither,
Tam tint[91] his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,[92]
When plundering herds assail their byke[93];
As open poussie'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[94] screech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get they fairin'[95]!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin';
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
[Pg 18] Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the keystane o' the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running-stream they darena cross[96]!
But ere the keystane 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,[97]—
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught 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.

[Pg 19]

WALTER SCOTT

LOCHINVAR

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border[98] his steed was the best;
And, save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Esk river[99] where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like the tide—
And now I am come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.

There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

[Pg 20]

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
There never a hall such a galliard [100] did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur [101];
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war.
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

[Pg 21]

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

MICHAEL

A Pastoral Poem

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,[102]
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
  And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
[Pg 22]
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;

And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.
  Upon the forest side in Grasmere vale
There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength; his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
[Pg 23]
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.
  His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool;
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
[Pg 24]
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.
  Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style

With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
[Pg 25] And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale,[103] up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.
  Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature need must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
[Pg 26] Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
  And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on man's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree, a name which yet it bears.
There while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction, and reproof bestowed
Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.
  And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed

At gate or gap to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
[Pg 27] Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks or threatening gestures, could perform.
But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?
Thus in his father's sight the Boy grew up;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.
While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
[Pg 28] To look his troubles in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
[Pg 29] What can be gained?"
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door

They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birthplace, built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."
  Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
[Pg 30] Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep;
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father, he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
  With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
[Pg 31] Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
  Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old man spoke to him:—"My son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,

And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Then when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed month
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
[Pg 32] But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived:
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should'st go."
At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
[Pg 33] "This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear

And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."
[Pg 34] The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissed him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.
A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.
There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
[Pg 35] Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at his death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The Cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

[Pg 36]

LUCY GRAY; or SOLITUDE

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray:
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor.
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father! will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon!"

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

[Pg 37]

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb,
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet!"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footprints small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone-wall;

And then an open field they crossed;
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

[Pg 38]

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

[Pg 39]

THOMAS CAMPBELL

HOHENLINDEN

On Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser,[104] rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed,
Each horseman drew his battle blade,
And furious every charger neighed,
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rushed the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow,
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
[Pg 40]
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave!
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

I

Of Nelson and the North,
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone;
By each gun the lighted brand,
In a bold determined hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

II

Like leviathans afloat,
Lay their bulwarks on the brine;
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime:
As they drifted on their path,
[Pg 41]
There was silence deep as death;
And the boldest held his breath,

For a time.

III

But the might of England flush'd
To anticipate the scene;
And her van the fleeter rush'd
O'er the deadly space between.
"Hearts of oak!" our captain cried; when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

IV

Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom:—
Then ceased—and all is wail,
As they strike the shatter'd sail;
Or, in conflagration pale,
Light the gloom.

V

Out spoke the victor then,
As he hailed them o'er the wave;
"Ye are brothers! ye are men!
And we conquer but to save:—
So peace instead of death let us bring;
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet,
With the crews, at England's feet
[Pg 42] And make submission meet
To our King."

VI

Then Denmark bless'd our chief,
That he gave her wounds repose;
And the sounds of joy and grief
From her people wildly rose,
As Death withdrew his shades from the day,
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

VII

Now joy, Old England, raise!
For the tidings of thy might,
By the festal cities' blaze,
Whilst the wine-cup shines in light;
And yet amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep,
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!

VIII

Brave hearts! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true;
On the deck of fame that died;—
With the gallant good Riou[105];
Soft sigh the winds of Heaven o'er their grave
While the billow mournful rolls,
And the mermaid's song condoles,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave.

[Pg 43]

CHARLES WOLFE

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA[106]

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
  As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
  O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
  The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
  And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
  Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
  With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
  And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
  And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,
  And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
  And we far away on the billow!

[Pg 44]

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
  And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
  In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our weary task was done
  When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
  That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
  From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
  But we left him alone with his glory.

[Pg 45]

LORD BYRON

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A Fable

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
  Nor grew it white
  In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears.[107]
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
  But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
  And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
  Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
  Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed[108]:
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;—

[Pg 46]

Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven[109] pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left:
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp[110]:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
  And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering[111] thing,
  For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
[Pg 47]
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart;
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements[112] of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
  A grating sound—not full and free
  As they of yore were wont to be;
  It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
  And to uphold and cheer the rest
  I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
  The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
  For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
  (When day was beautiful to me
  As to young eagles being free)—
[Pg 48]
  A polar day,[113] which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
  Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
  And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for naught but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,

Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorred to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth[114] did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman[115] lies by Chillon's walls,
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
[Pg 49] Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthrals:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rocked,
And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,[116]
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moistened many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow-men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
[Pg 50] My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died, and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begged them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,

That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laughed—and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
[Pg 51] To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:—
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,[117]
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmixed with such—but sure and slow;
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
[Pg 52] Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear—
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:—I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last—the sole—the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe;
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why

I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.[118]

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
[Pg 53]
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,[119]
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,
It was not night—it was not day,
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track,
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
[Pg 54]
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul[120] come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,[121]
A single cloud on a sunny day,
[Pg 55]

While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
  When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfastened did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun.
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
  It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
  Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
[Pg 56]
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channelled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,[122]
Which in my very face did smile,
    The only one in view;
A small green isle it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
    Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
[Pg 57]
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;

It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
  I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
  And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
  I asked not why, and recked not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
  I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
[Pg 58] And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.[123]

MAZEPPA

I

'Twas after dread Pultowa's[124] day,
  When Fortune left the royal Swede.
Around a slaughter'd army lay,
  No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
  Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
  And Moscow's walls were safe again,
Until a day more dark and drear,[125]
And a more memorable year,
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

II

Such was the hazard of the die[126];
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
[Pg 59] Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid;
And not a voice was heard t' upbraid
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When truth had naught to dread from power.
His horse was slain, and Gieta[127] gave
His own—and died the Russians' slave.
This too sinks after many a league
Of well-sustain'd, but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests darkling,
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling—
  The beacons of surrounding foes—
A king must lay his limbs at length.
  Are these the laurels and repose

For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In outworn nature's agony;
His wounds were stiff—his limbs were stark—
The heavy hour was chill and dark;
The fever in his blood forbade
a transient slumber's fitful aid:
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will:
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

III

A band of chiefs!—alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous: upon the clay
[Pg 60]
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed,
For danger levels man and brute,[128]
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade—
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman,[129] calm and bold.
But first, outspent with his long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane,
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browse beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too;
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obey'd his voice, and came to call,
And knew him in the midst of all:
Though thousands were around,—and Night,
Without a star, pursued her flight,—
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
[Pg 61]
Felt if his arms in order good
The long day's march had well withstood—
If still the powder fill'd the pan,
And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt—
And next the venerable man,
From out his haversack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock;
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offer'd then
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe;—
And then he said—"Of all our band,
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,
In skirmish, march, or forage, none
Can less have said or more have done

Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
So fit a pain had never birth,
Since Alexander's days till now,
As thy Bucephalus[130] and thou:
All Scythia's[131] fame to thine should yield
For pricking on o'er flood and field."
Mazeppa answer'd—"Ill betide
The school wherein I learn'd to ride!"
Quoth Charles—"Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?"
Mazeppa said—"'Twere long to tell;
And we have many a league to go,
[Pg 62]
With every now and then a blow,
And ten to one at least the foe,
Before our steeds may graze at ease
Beyond the swift Borysthenes[132];
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
And I will be the sentinel
Of this your troop."—"But I request,"
Said Sweden's monarch, "thou wilt tell
This tale of thine, and I may reap,
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
For at this moment from my eyes
The hope of present slumber flies."

"Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
My seventy years of memory back:
I think 'twas in my twentieth spring—
Ay, 'twas,—when Casimir was king—
John Casimir,—I was his page
Six summers, in my earlier age.
A learned monarch, faith! was he,
And most unlike your majesty:
He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again;
And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
He reign'd in most unseemly quiet;
Not that he had no cares to vex,
He loved the muses and the sex;
And sometimes these so froward are,
They made him wish himself at war;
But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
Another mistress, or new book.
And then he gave prodigious fêtes—
All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
[Pg 63]
To gaze upon his splendid court,
And dames, and chiefs, of princely port:
He was the Polish Solomon,
So sung his poets, all but one,
Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
And boasted that he could not flatter.
It was a court of jousts and mimes,[133]
Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
Even I for once produced some verses,
And sign'd my odes 'Despairing Thyrsis.'[134]
There was a certain Palatine,[135]
  A count of far and high descent,
Rich as a salt or silver mine;
And he was proud, ye may divine,
  As if from heaven he had been sent.
He had such wealth in blood and ore
  As few could match beneath the throne;
And he would gaze upon his store,
And o'er his pedigree would pore,
Until by some confusion led,
Which almost look'd like want of head,
  He thought their merits were his own.
His wife was not of his opinion—
  His junior she by thirty years—
Grew daily tired of his dominion;
  And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
  To virtue a few farewell tears,
A restless dream or two, some glances

At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
Awaited but the usual chances,
(Those happy accidents which render
The coldest dames so very tender,)
To deck her Count with titles given,
[Pg 64] 'Tis said, as passports into heaven;
But, strange to say, they rarely boast
Of these, who have deserved them most.

V

"I was a goodly stripling then;
At seventy years I so may say,
That there were few, or boys or men,
Who, in my dawning time of day,
Of vassal or of knight's degree,
Could vie in vanities with me;
For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
A port, not like to this ye see,
But as smooth as all is rugged now;
For time, and care, and war, have plough'd
My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavow'd
By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday.
This change was wrought, too, long ere age
Had ta'en my features for his page:
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength, my courage, or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree,
With starless skies my canopy.
But let me on: Theresa's form—
Methinks it glides before me now,
Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
The memory is so quick and warm;
And yet I find no words to tell
The shape of her I loved so well.
[Pg 65] She had the Asiatic eye,
Such as our Turkish neighbourhood,
Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
Dark as above us is the sky;
But through it stole a tender light,
Like the first moonrise of midnight;
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
All love, half languor, and half fire,
Like saints that at the stake expire,
And lift their raptured looks on high
As though it were a joy to die;—
A brow like a midsummer lake,
Transparent with the sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And heaven beholds her face within;
A cheek and lip—but why proceed?
I loved her then—I love her still;
And such as I am, love indeed
In fierce extremes—in good and ill;
But still we love even in our rage,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past,
As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI

"We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh'd,
She did not speak, and yet replied:
There are ten thousand tones and signs
We hear and see, but none defines—
Involuntary sparks of thought,
Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought[136]
[Pg 66] And form a strange intelligence
Alike mysterious and intense,
Which link the burning chain that binds,
Without their will, young hearts and minds:

Conveying, as the electric wire,
We know not how, the absorbing fire.—
I saw, and sigh'd—in silence wept,
And still reluctant distance kept,
Until I was made known to her,
And we might then and there confer
Without suspicion—then, even then,
  I long'd, and was resolved to speak;
But on my lips they died again,
  The accents tremulous and weak,
Until one hour.—There is a game,
  A frivolous and foolish play,
  Wherewith we while away the day;
It is—I have forgot the name—
And we to this, it seems, were set,
By some strange chance, which I forget:
I reckon'd not if I won or lost,
  It was enough for me to be
  So near to hear, and oh! to see
The being whom I loved the most.
I watch'd her as a sentinel,
(May ours this dark night watch as well!)
  Until I saw, and thus it was,
That she was pensive, nor perceived
Her occupation, nor was grieved
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
Play'd on for hours, as if her will
Yet bound her to the place, though not
That hers might be the winning lot.
[Pg 67] Then through my brain the thought did pass
Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,
  All incoherent as they were—
Their eloquence was little worth,
But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
  Who listens once will listen twice;
  Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
And one refusal no rebuff.

VII

"I loved, and was beloved again—
  They tell me, sire, you never knew
  Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
I shorten all my joy or pain;
To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;
But all men are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
I am—or rather *was*—a prince,
  A chief of thousands, and could lead
  Them on where each would foremost bleed;
But could not o'er myself evince
The like control.—But to resume:
  I loved, and was beloved again;
In sooth, it is a happy doom,
  But yet where happiest ends in pain.—
We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to that lady's bower
Was fiery Expectation's dower.
[Pg 68] My days and nights were nothing—all
Except that hour which doth recall
In the long lapse from youth to age
  No other like itself—I'd give
  The Ukraine back again to live
It o'er once more—and be a page,
The happy page, who was the lord
Of one soft heart and his own sword,
And had no other gem nor wealth
Save nature's gift of youth and health.—
We met in secret—doubly sweet,
Some say, they find it so to meet;
I know not that—I would have given

My life but to have call'd her mine
In the full view of earth and heaven;
For I did oft and long repine
That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII

"For lovers there are many eyes,
And such there were on us;—the devil
On such occasions should be civil—
The devil!—I'm loth to do him wrong,
It might be some untoward saint,
Who would not be at rest too long
But to his pious bile gave vent—
But one fair night, some lurking spies
Surprised and seized us both.
The Count was something more than wroth—
I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
All cap-à-pie[137] from head to heel,
What 'gainst their numbers could I do?—
[Pg 69] 'Twas near his castle, far away
From city or from succour near,
And almost on the break of day;
I did not think to see another,
My moments seem'd reduced to few;
And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
And, it may be, a saint or two,
As I resign'd me to my fate,
They led me to the castle gate:
Theresa's doom I never knew,
Our lot was henceforth separate—
An angry man, ye may opine,
Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
And he had reason good to be,
But he was most enraged lest such
An accident should chance to touch
Upon his future pedigree;
Nor less amazed, that such a blot
His noble 'scutcheon[138] should have got,
While he was highest of his line;
Because unto himself he seem'd
The first of men, nor less he deem'd
In others' eyes, and most in mine.
'Sdeath! with a *page*—perchance a king
Had reconciled him to the thing;
But with a stripling of a page—
I felt—but cannot paint his rage.

IX

"'Bring forth the horse!'—the horse was brought;
In truth, he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
[Pg 70] Who look'd 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 undefined—
'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;
They loosed him with a sudden lash—
Away!—away!—and on we dash!—
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X

"Away!—away!—My breath was gone—
I saw not where he hurried on:
'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foam'd—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 wrench'd my head,
  And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
  Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
And writhing half my form about,
Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
The thunder of my courser's speed,
[Pg 71] 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 hearth-stone 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 scorch'd and blackening roof,
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
  They little thought that day of pain,
When launch'd, 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 play'd me then a bitter prank,
  When, with the wild horse for my guide,
They bound me to his foaming flank:
At length I play'd 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.

[Pg 72]

XI

"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 chequer'd with the northern light.
Town—village—none were on our track,
  But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black;
  And, save the scarce seen battlement
On distant heights of some stronghold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man: the year before
A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
And where the Spahi's[139] 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 answer'd 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 slacken'd in his speed;
But no—my bound and slender frame
  Was nothing to his angry might,

And merely like a spur became:
[Pg 73] 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 cords 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.

XII

"We near'd 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,
Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
Which stands thereon like stiffen'd 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,
[Pg 74] 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 scarr'd 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 follow'd 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.
Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish—if it must be so—
At bay, destroying many a foe.
When first my courser's race begun,
I wish'd 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,
Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
[Pg 75] Than through the forest-paths he past—
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favour'd child
Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still—
A woman piqued—who has her will.

XIII

"The wood was past; 'twas more than noon,
But chill the air although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold—
Prolong'd 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 stirr'd 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 roll'd round,
I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more;
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
[Pg 76] 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 pass'd, 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.

XIV

"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 reflow'd though thick and chill;
My ear with uncouth[140] noises rang,
[Pg 77] My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight return'd, though dim, alas!
And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
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 stiffen'd 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.

XV

"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
[Pg 78] 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 scatter'd spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right.
But nought 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[141] rose
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI

"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 nought avail'd—
My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
[Pg 79] 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 prolong'd their pain.
The dizzy race seem'd 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 roll'd away—
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And call'd the radiance from their cars,
And filled the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII

"Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around—behind—before;
What booted 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,[142]
[Pg 80] Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were—or seem'd—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?
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 mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretched by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd 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 re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable;
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:
[Pg 81] 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 seem'd 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,
Link'd 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!
I little deem'd another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.

"And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toil round,
With just enough of life to see
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,
That makes us feel at length resign'd
To that which our foreboding years
Presents the worst and last of fears
Inevitable—even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon;
Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare
[Pg 82] That prudence might escape:
At times both wish'd for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,

Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,
And welcome in no shape.
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revell'd beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer oft than he
Whose heritage was misery:
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,
Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future (which is view'd
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued,)
With nought perhaps to grieve:—
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distemper'd eyes,
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.
To-morrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;
To-morrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
To-morrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
And must it dawn upon his grave?

[Pg 83]

XVIII

"The sun was sinking—still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death had need,
No hope arose of being freed.
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die
Ere his repast begun.
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
Together scared him off at length.—
I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er

[Pg 84]

My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain—
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX

"I woke—Where was I?—Do I see
A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie?
And is it mortal, yon bright eye

That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall:
The sparkle of her eye I caught,
Even with my first return of thought;
For ever and anon she threw
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free.
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be,—
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast.
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,
She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,
But fail'd—and she approach'd, and made
With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
[Pg 85] The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free;
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers—ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music follow'd her light feet;—
But those she call'd were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return:—while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.

XX

"She came with mother and with sire—
What need of more?—I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain—
They bore me to the nearest hut—
They brought me into life again—
Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness,
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne,—
[Pg 86] What mortal his own doom may guess?—
Let none despond, let none despair!
To-morrow the Borysthenes
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank,—and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades, good night!"—The Hetman threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale *he* wonder'd not,—
The king had been an hour asleep.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
[Pg 87] And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail,
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

[Pg 88]

JOHN KEATS

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

I

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's[143] fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his death-bell rung;
[Pg 89] The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve;
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling[144] trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuff'd, [145]in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,[146]
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
[Pg 90] If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,[147]
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs[148] unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro,[149] with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
[Pg 91] Buttress'd[150] from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth[151] such
things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena[152] foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame,[153] weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole bloodthirsty race!

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
[Pg 92]
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—Ah, Gossip[154] dear,
We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom[155]
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,[156]
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle[157] time to grieve."

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
[Pg 93]
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddlebook,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap[158] of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot[159]: then doth he propose

A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard thing,
[Pg 94]
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin[160] paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates[161] and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame[162]
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
[Pg 95]
The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,

Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

XXIV

A casement high[163] and triple arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
[Pg 96] Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,[164]
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,[165]
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules[166] on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint;
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
[Pg 97] Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal[167] where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean[168] amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,[169]
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
[Pg 98] While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother[170] than the creamy curd,
And lucent[171] syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite[172]:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be.
[Pg 99] He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd "La belle dame sans mercy:[173]"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;

And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
[Pg 100] Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
[Pg 101] Arise—arise! the morning is at hand:—
The bloated wassailers[174] will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—

The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans;

XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
[Pg 102] That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela[175] the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

[Pg 103]

ALFRED TENNYSON

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often looked at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd towards William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, "My son:
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answer'd short:
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
[Pg 104] And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"
And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
"I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
[Pg 105]
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child,
[Pg 106]
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said, "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."
So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more."
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back:
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
[Pg 107]
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."
So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw

The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
"O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!' Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before."
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
[Pg 108] "I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children."
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

ŒNONE—1832

There lies a vale in Ida,[176] lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian[177] hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus[178]
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas[179] and Ilion's[180] column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.
Hither came at noon
[Pg 109] Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris,[181] once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,[182]
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,[183]
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
[Pg 110]
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois[184] all alone.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian[185] gold,
That smelt ambrosially,[186] and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-brow'd Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine
As lovelier than whatever Oread[187] haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement and the charm of married brows.'

[Pg 111]
"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus[188]; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:
But light-foot Iris[189] brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè[190] comes to-day,
Pallas[191] and Aphroditè,[192] claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,

Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower.
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus,[193] and asphodel,[194]
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock[195] lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
[Pg 112] Coming thro' heaven like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale,
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee, king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
[Pg 113] O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her clear and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon[196] could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge, of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure,
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow

Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,
[Pg 114] Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Idalian[197] Aphroditè beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian[198] wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
[Pg 115] When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,[199]
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable,[200] that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

[Pg 116] "O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,

Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth;
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
[Pg 117]
With the Greek woman.[201] I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra,[202] for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

ENOCH ARDEN

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows[203]; and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children, of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke,[204] and boats updrawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
[Pg 118]
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff;
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine too," said Philip, "turn and turn about:"
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger made

Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out, "I hate you, Enoch," and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.[205]

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch: tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
[Pg 119] Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:
And all men look'd upon him favorably:
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honorable toil;
[Pg 120] With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier,[206] and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp[207]
And peacock-yewtree[208] of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven: thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell:
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
[Pg 121]
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was gone.
Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea, twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

[Pg 122]
Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.

So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
[Pg 123]
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes,
Whatever came to him: and then he said
"Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it."
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle, "and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things,
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

[Pg 124]
At length she spoke, "O Enoch, you are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall look on yours.[209]
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day), get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments came,
"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again,
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said,
"Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She, when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps
[Pg 125] She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding "what would Enoch say?"
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

[Pg 126] In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
"Surely," said Philip, "I may see her now,
May be some little comfort;" therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falteringly,
"Annie, I came to ask a favor of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply,
"Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

"I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said
You chose the best among us—a strong man:
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—
For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours: that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
[Pg 127] To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives?—
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again,

Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
This is the favor that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd, "I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me;
He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours."
And Philip ask'd
"Then you will let me, Annie?"
There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth[210] beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,
[Pg 128] Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies[211] from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him,
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others nutting to the wood,
[Pg 129] And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him,
"Come with us, Father Philip," he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began[212]
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest," she said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge

To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word.
"Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
"The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was lost!
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
[Pg 130]
And make them orphans quite?" And Annie said
"I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
"Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. Oh, Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well then—let me speak:
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of His creatures. Think upon it:
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours:
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
"You have been as God's good angel in our house.
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
[Pg 131]
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"
"I am content," he answer'd, "to be loved
A little after Enoch." "Oh," she cried,
Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
Oh, wait a little!" Philip sadly said,
"Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little." "Nay," she cried,
"I am bound: you have my promise—in a year;
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"
And Philip answer'd, "I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
Then, fearing night and chill for Annie, rose,
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
Up came the children laden with their spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
Saying gently, "Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong.
I am always bound to you, but you are free."

Then Annie weeping answered, "I am bound."

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?" she ask'd.
[Pg 132] "Yes, if the nuts," he said, "be ripe again:
Come out and see." But she—she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
"Take your own time, Annie, take your own time."
And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half another year had slipped away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;
Some that she but held off to draw him on;
And others laughed at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds;
And one in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent's eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on him
Sharp as reproach.
At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
[Pg 133] Pray'd for a sign, "my Enoch, is he gone?"
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
"Under the palm-tree.[213]" That was nothing to her:
No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:
"He is gone," she thought, "he is happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing cried
'Hosanna in the highest!'" Here she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him,
"There is no reason why we should not wed."
"Then for God's sake," he answer'd, "both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often,
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
[Pg 134] Being with child: but when her child was born,

Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd
The ship Good Fortune, tho' at setting forth
The Biscay,[214] roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,[215]
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
[Pg 135] These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem[216];
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning, "Wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses[217]
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,[218]
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
[Pg 136] Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:

No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east:
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him, haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

[Pg 137]

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none who speaks with Him seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay:
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clamor. Downward from his mountain gorge[219]
Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what: and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue
[Pg 138] Was loosen'd, till he made them understand;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took aboard
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it;
And clothes they gave him and free passage home;
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his county, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:
And that same morning officers and men

Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt[220] or tilth[221] or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
[Pg 139]
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking, "dead, or dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was gone
Who kept it; and his widow, Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
[Pg 140]
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller; only when she closed,
"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost,"
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering, "cast away and lost;"
Again in deeper inward whispers, "lost!"

But Enoch yearned to see her face again;
"If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy." So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,

The latest[222] house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle,[223] and a walk divided it:
[Pg 141]
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand,
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy[224] arms,
Caught at, and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd:
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
[Pg 142]
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to these?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never: no father's kiss for me—the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

[Pg 143]
He was not all unhappy. His resolve

Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife,"
He said to Miriam, "that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"
"Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, "fear enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;" and he thought
"After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
I wait His time;" and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stinted commerce of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
Yet since he did but labor for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

[Pg 144]

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking, "after I am gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,
"Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."
"Dead," clamor'd the good woman, "hear him talk;
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round."
"Swear," added Enoch sternly, "on the book."
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"
"Know him?" she said, "I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:
"His head is low, and no man cares for him.
I think I have not three days more to live;
I am the man." At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
"You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
Higher than you be." Enoch said again,
"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
My grief and solitude have broken me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,

[Pg 145]

Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only, "See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

"Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you now
When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she lay her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us any thing but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood,
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
[Pg 146] But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad,
Crying with a loud voice "A sail! a sail!
I am saved;" and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

THE REVENGE

A Ballad of the Fleet

I

At Flores in the Azores[225] Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
[Pg 147] 'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard[226]: 'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition[227] dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

IIII

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships of war that day,

Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford[228] in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
[Pg 148] And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew[229] and the stake[230] for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again, 'We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville,[231] the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don[232] or devil yet.'

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of her fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

[Pg 149]

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall Long and loud,
Four galleons[233] drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
[Pg 150] For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back withher dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so could fight us no more
—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

X

For he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,

But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

[Pg 151]

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
'We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!'

[Pg 152]

XII

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a gallant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
[Pg 153]
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down in the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthy alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

[Pg 154]

ROBERT BROWNING

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

[16 − −]

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,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique[234] right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren,[235] the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom,[236] a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld,[237] 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln[238] church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

[Pg 155]

At Aershot,[239] 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,[240] 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.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz[241] and past Tongres,[242] 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[243] a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

[Pg 156]

"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,[244]
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.
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.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,

On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust,[245] you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

[Pg 157]

Just as perhaps he mused[246] "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes[247]
Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird[248] flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

[Pg 158]

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A Child's Story

(Written for, and inscribed to, W. M. the Younger)

I

Hamelin[249] Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking

In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
[Pg 159] "'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council;
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder[250] I'd my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
O for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber-door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
[Pg 160] Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V

"Come in!" the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's[251] tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

VI

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."[252]
[Pg 161] (And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque;

And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,[253]
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam[254]
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
[Pg 162] And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step by step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To rat-land home his commentary:[255]
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter casks:
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
Already staved, like a great sun shone
[Pg 163] Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace

Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke[256];
[Pg 164] But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried;
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver[257]!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald[258]?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII

Once more he stept into the street,
  And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
[Pg 165] And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
  Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye

That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
[Pg 166] "He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings:
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

[Pg 167]

XIV

Alas, alas! for Hamelin!
There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye[259] takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,

And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
[Pg 168] How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbors lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free fróm rats or fróm mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise!

HERVÉ RIEL

I

On the sea and at the Hogue,[260] sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the Rance, [261]
With the English fleet in view.

[Pg 169]

II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville.
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signalled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these
to pass?" laughed they:
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the 'Formidable' here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

[Pg 170]

IV

Then was called a council straight,
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound[262]?
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended Damfreville his speech.)
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
  For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
    No such man of mark, and meet
    With his betters to compete!
    But a simple Breton sailor pressed[263] by Tourville[264]
        for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.[265]

[Pg 171]

VI

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel:
  "Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell,
  'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
    Morn and eve, night and day,
    Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
  Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
    Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe
        me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
  Have the biggest ship to steer,
    Get this 'Formidable' clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
  Right to Solidor past Grève,
    And there lay them safe and sound;
    And if one ship misbehave,
    —Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
  "Steer us in, then, small and great!
[Pg 172] Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
  He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
  See, safe through shoal and rock,
  How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
  Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"—sure as fate,
Up the English come—too late!

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm:
  They see the green trees wave
  On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
"Just our rapture to enhance,
  Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
  As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
[Pg 173] How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
  "This is Paradise for Hell!
  Let France, let France's King
  Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word,

"Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
"Since I needs must say my say,
[Pg 174]
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?—
Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife the Belle Aurore!

[Pg 175]

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

THE WHITE SHIP

Henry I[266] of England—25th Nov., 1120

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen,[267] poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a king on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no king but God alone.*)

King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death his son should reign.

'Twas so in my youth I heard men say,
And my old age calls it back to-day.

King Henry of England's realm was he,
And Henry Duke of Normandy.

The times had changed when on either coast
"Clerkly Harry" was all his boast.[268]

Of ruthless[269] strokes full many an one
He had struck to crown himself and his son;
And his elder brother's eyes were gone.[270]

And when to the chase his court would crowd,
The poor flung ploughshares on his road,
And shrieked: "Our cry is from King to God!"

[Pg 176]

But all the chiefs of the English land
Had knelt and kissed the Prince's hand.

And next with his son he sailed to France
To claim the Norman allegiance:

And every baron in Normandy
Had taken the oath of fealty.[271]

'Twas sworn and sealed, and the day had come
When the King and the Prince might journey home:

For Christmas cheer is to home hearts dear,
And Christmas now was drawing near.

Stout Fitz-Stephen came to the King,—
A pilot famous in seafaring;

And he held to the King in all men's sight,
A mark of gold for his tribute's right.

"Liege[272] Lord! my father guided the ship
From whose boat your father's[273] foot did slip
When he caught the English soil in his grip,

"And cried: 'By this clasp I claim command
O'er every rood[274] of English land!'

"He was borne to the realm you rule o'er now
In that ship with the archer carved at her prow:

"And thither I'll bear an' it be my due,
Your father's son and his grandson too.

"The famed White Ship is mine in the bay;
From Harfleur's harbor[275] she sails to-day,

[Pg 177]

"With masts fair-pennoned as Norman spears
And with fifty well-tried mariners."

Quoth the King: "My ships are chosen each one,
But I'll not say nay to Stephen's son.

"My son and daughter and fellowship
Shall cross the water in the White Ship."

The King set sail with the eve's south wind,
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his, a princely show,
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,
Three hundred living souls we were:

And I Berold was the meanest hind[276]
In all that train to the Prince assign'd.

The Prince was a lawless shameless youth;
From his father's loins he sprang without ruth:

Eighteen years till then had he seen,
And the devil's dues in him were eighteen.

And now he cried: "Bring wine from below;
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row:

"Our speed shall o'ertake my father's flight
Though we sail from the harbor at midnight."

The rowers made good cheer without check;
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck;
The night was light and they danced on the deck.

[Pg 178]

But at midnight's stroke they cleared the bay,
And the White Ship furrowed the water-way.

The sails were set, and the oars kept tune
To the double flight of the ship and the moon:

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead:

As white as a lily glimmered she
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, "Friends, 'tis the hour to sing!
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing?"

And under the winter stars' still throng,
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

A song,—nay, a shriek that rent the sky,
That leaped o'er the deep!—the grievous cry
Of three hundred living that now must die.

An instant shriek that sprang to the shock
As the ship's keel felt the sunken rock.

'Tis said that afar—a shrill strange sigh—
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm
'Mid all those folk that the waves must whelm.

A great King's heir for the waves to whelm
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm!

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,
By the stealthy stab of the sharp reef pierced,

[Pg 179]

And like the moil[277] round a sinking cup,
The waters against her crowded up.

A moment the pilot's senses spin,—
The next he snatched the Prince 'mid the din,
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in.

A few friends leaped with him, standing near.
"Row! the sea's smooth and the night is clear!"

"What! none to be saved but these and I?"
"Row, row as you'd live! All here must die!"

Out of the churn of the choking ship,
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip.

'Twas then o'er the splitting bulwarks' brim
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft still rowing apace,
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks clave one and all
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I Berold was clinging anear;
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her.

He knew her face and he heard her cry,
And he said, "Put back! she must not die!"

And back with the current's force they reel
Like a leaf that's drawn to a water-wheel.

[Pg 180]

'Neath the ship's travail they scarce might float,
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide:
O'er the naked keel as she best might slide,
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

He reached an oar to her from below,
And stiffened his arms to clutch her so.
And "Saved!" was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell:
It turned as a bucket turns in a well,
And nothing was there but the surge and swell.

The Prince that was and the King to come,
There in an instant gone to his doom,

In spite of all England's bended knee
And maugre[278] the Norman fealty!

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be king, he oft would vow,
He'd yoke the peasant to his own plough.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a king on a throne.*)

[Pg 181]

'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no king but God alone.*)

And now the end came o'er the waters' womb
Like the last great Day that's yet to come.

With prayers in vain and curses in vain,
The White Ship sundered on the mid-main:

And what were men and what was a ship
Were toys and splinters in the sea's grip.

I Berold was down in the sea;
And passing strange though the thing may be,
Of dreams then known I remember me.

Blithe is the shout on Harfleur's strand
When morning lights the sails to land:

And blithe is Honfleur's[279] echoing gloam
When mothers call the children home:

And high do the bells of Rouen beat
When the Body of Christ[280] goes down the street.

These things and the like were heard and shown
In a moment's trance 'neath the sea alone;

And when I rose, 'twas the sea did seem,
And not these things, to be all a dream.

The ship was gone and the crowd was gone,
And the deep shuddered and the moon shone:

[Pg 182]

And in a strait grasp my arms did span
The mainyard rent from the mast where it ran;

And on it with me was another man.

Where lands were none 'neath the dim sea-sky,
We told our names, that man and I.

"O I am Godefroy l'Aigle hight,[281]
And son I am to a belted knight."

"And I am Berold the butcher's son
Who slays the beasts in Rouen town."

Then cried we upon God's name, as we
Did drift on the bitter winter sea.

But lo! a third man rose o'er the wave,
And we said, "Thank God! us three may He save!"

He clutched to the yard with panting stare,
And we looked and knew Fitz-Stephen there.

He clung, and "What of the Prince?" quoth he.
"Lost, lost!" we cried. He cried, "Woe on me!"
And loosed his hold and sank through the sea.

And soul with soul again in that space
We two were together face to face:

And each knew each, as the moment sped,
Less for one living than for one dead:

And every still star overhead
Seemed an eye that knew we were but dead.

[Pg 183]

And the hours passed; till the noble's son
Sighed, "God be thy help! my strength's foredone[282]!

"O farewell, friend, for I can no more!"
"Christ take thee!" I moaned; and his life was o'er.

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,
And I drifted over the sea alone.

At last the morning rose on the sea
Like an angel's wing that beat tow'ds me.

Sore numbed I was in my sheepskin coat;
Half dead I hung, and might nothing note,
Till I woke sun-warmed in a fisher-boat.

The sun was high o'er the eastern brim
As I praised God and gave thanks to Him.

That day I told my tale to a priest,
Who charged me, till the shrift[283] were releas'd,
That I should keep it in mine own breast.

And with the priest I thence did fare
To King Henry's court at Winchester.[284]

We spoke with the King's high chamberlain,
And he wept and mourned again and again,
As if his own son had been slain:

And round us ever there crowded fast
Great men with faces all aghast:

And who so bold that might tell the thing
Which now they knew to their lord the King?
Much woe I learned in their communing.

[Pg 184]

The King had watched with a heart sore stirred
For two whole days, and this was the third:

And still to all his court would he say,
"What keeps my son so long away?"

And they said: "The ports lie far and wide
That skirt the swell of the English tide;

"And English cliffs are not more white
Than her women are, and scarce so light
Her skies as their eyes are blue and bright;

"And in some port that he reached from France
The Prince has lingered for his pleasaunce."[285]

But once the King asked: "What distant cry
Was that we heard 'twixt the sea and sky?"

And one said: "With suchlike shouts, pardie[286]
Do the fishers fling their nets at sea."

And one: "Who knows not the shrieking quest
When the sea-mew misses its young from its nest?"

'Twas thus till now they had soothed his dread
Albeit they knew not what they said:

But who should speak to-day of the thing
That all knew there except the King?

Then pondering much they found a way,
And met round the King's high seat that day.

And the King sat with a heart sore stirred,
And seldom he spoke and seldom heard.

[Pg 185]

'Twas then through the hall the King was 'ware
Of a little boy with golden hair,

As bright as the golden poppy is
That the beach breeds for the surf to kiss:

Yet pale his cheek as the thorn in Spring,
And his garb black like the raven's wing.

Nothing heard but his foot through the hall,
For now the lords were silent all.

And the King wondered, and said, "Alack!
Who sends me a fair boy dressed in black?

"Why, sweet heart, do you pace through the hall
As though my court were a funeral?"

Then lowly knelt the child at the dais,[287]
And looked up weeping in the King's face.

"O wherefore black, O King, ye may say,
For white is the hue of death to-day.

"Your son and all his fellowship
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship."

King Henry fell as a man struck dead;
And speechless still he stared from his bed
When to him next day my rede[288] I read.

There's many an hour must needs beguile
A King's high heart that he should smile,—

[Pg 186]

Full many a lordly hour, full fain
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign:—

But this King never smiled again.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a king on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no king but God alone.*)

ATALANTA'S RACE

Argument

Atalanta, daughter of King Schœneus, not willing to lose her virgin's estate, made it a law to all suitors that they should run a race with her in the public place, and if they failed to overcome her should die unrevenged; and thus many brave men perished. At last came Milanion, the son of Amphidamas, who, outrunning her with the help of Venus, gained the virgin and wedded her.

Through thick Arcadian[289] woods a hunter went,
Following the beasts up, on a fresh spring day;
But since his horn-tipped bow, but seldom bent,
Now at the noon-tide naught had happed to slay,
Within a vale he called his hounds away,
Hearkening the echoes of his lone voice cling
About the cliffs and through the beech-trees ring.

But when they ended, still awhile he stood,
And but the sweet familiar thrush could hear,
And all the day-long noises of the wood,
And o'er the dry leaves of the vanished year
His hounds' feet pattering as they drew anear,
And heavy breathing from their heads low hung,
To see the mighty cornel[290] bow unstrung.

Then smiling did he turn to leave the place,
But with his first step some new fleeting thought
A shadow cast across his sunburnt face;
I think the golden net that April brought
From some warm world his wavering soul had caught;
[Pg 188] For, sunk in vague sweet longing, did he go
Betwixt the trees with doubtful steps and slow.

Yet howsoever slow he went, at last
The trees grew sparser, and the wood was done;
Whereon one farewell, backward look he cast,
Then, turning round to see what place was won,
With shaded eyes looked underneath the sun,
And o'er green meads and new-turned furrows brown
Beheld the gleaming of King Schœneus'[291] town.

So thitherward he turned, and on each side
The folk were busy on the teeming land,
And man and maid from the brown furrows cried,
Or midst the newly blossomed vines did stand,
And as the rustic weapon pressed the hand
Thought of the nodding of the well-filled ear,
Or how the knife the heavy bunch should shear.

Merry it was: about him sung the birds,
The spring flowers bloomed along the firm dry road,
The sleek-skinned mothers of the sharp-horned herds
Now for the barefoot milking-maidens lowed;
While from the freshness of his blue abode,
Glad his death-bearing arrows to forget,
The broad sun blazed, nor scattered plagues as yet.

Through such fair things unto the gates he came,
And found them open, as though peace were there;
Wherethrough, unquestioned of his race or name,
He entered, and along the streets 'gan fare,
Which at the first of folk were wellnigh bare;
But pressing on, and going more hastily,
Men hurrying too he 'gan at last to see.

[Pg 189] Following the last of these, he still pressed on,
Until an open space he came unto,
Where wreaths of fame had oft been lost and won,
For feats of strength folk there were wont to do.
And now our hunter looked for something new,
Because the whole wide space was bare, and stilled
The high seats were, with eager people filled.

There with the others to a seat he gat,
Whence he beheld a broidered canopy,
'Neath which in fair array King Schœneus sat
Upon his throne with councillors thereby;
And underneath this well-wrought seat and high,
He saw a golden image of the sun,[292]
A silver image of the Fleet-foot One.[293]

A brazen altar stood beneath their feet
Whereon a thin flame flickered in the wind;
Nigh this a herald clad in raiment meet
Made ready even now his horn to wind,
By whom a huge man held a sword, intwined
With yellow flowers; these stood a little space
From off the altar, nigh the starting-place.

And there two runners did the sign abide
Foot set to foot,—a young man slim and fair,
Crisp-haired, well-knit, with firm limbs often tried
In places where no man his strength may spare;
Dainty his thin coat was, and on his hair
A golden circlet of renown he wore,
And in his hand an olive garland bore.

But on this day with whom shall he contend?
A maid stood by him like Diana[294] clad
[Pg 190] When in the woods she lists[295] her bow to bend,
Too fair for one to look on and be glad,
Who scarcely yet has thirty summer's had,
If he must still behold her from afar;
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

She seemed all earthly matters to forget;
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear,
Her wide gray eyes upon the goal were set
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near,
But her foe trembled as a man in fear;
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

Now through the hush there broke the trumpet's clang
Just as the setting sun made eventide.
Then from light feet a spurt of dust there sprang,
And swiftly were they running side by side;
But silent did the thronging folk abide
Until the turning-post was reached at last,
And round about it still abreast they passed.

But when the people saw how close they ran,
When half-way to the starting-point they were,
A cry of joy broke forth, whereat the man
Headed the white-foot runner, and drew near
Unto the very end of all his fear;
And scarce his straining feet the ground could feel,
And bliss unhoped for o'er his heart 'gan steal.

But midst the loud victorious shouts he heard
Her footsteps drawing nearer, and the sound
Of fluttering raiment, and thereat afeard
His flushed and eager face he turned around,
[Pg 191] And even then he felt her past him bound
Fleet as the wind, but scarcely saw her there
Till on the goal she laid her fingers fair.

There stood she breathing like a little child
Amid some warlike clamor laid asleep,
For no victorious joy her red lips smiled;
Her cheek its wonted freshness did but keep;
No glance lit up her clear gray eyes and deep,
Though some divine thought softened all her face
As once more rang the trumpet through the place.

But her late foe stopped short amidst his course,
One moment gazed upon her piteously,
Then with a groan his lingering feet did force

To leave the spot whence he her eyes could see;
And, changed like one who knows his time must be
But short and bitter, without any word
He knelt before the bearer of the sword;

Then high rose up the gleaming deadly blade,
Bared of its flowers, and through the crowded place
Was silence how, and midst of it the maid
Went by the poor wretch at a gentle pace,
And he to hers upturned his sad white face;
Nor did his eyes behold another sight
Ere on his soul there fell eternal night.

So was the pageant ended, and all folk,
Talking of this and that familiar thing
In little groups from that sad concourse broke,
For now the shrill bats were upon the wing,
[Pg 192]
And soon dark night would slay the evening,
And in dark gardens sang the nightingale
Her little-heeded, oft-repeated tale.

And with the last of all the hunter went,
Who, wondering at the strange sight he had seen,
Prayed an old man to tell him what it meant,
Both why the vanquished man so slain had been,
And if the maiden were an earthly queen,
Or rather what much more she seemed to be,
No sharer in the world's mortality.

"Stranger," said he, "I pray she soon may die
Whose lovely youth has slain so many an one!
King Schœneus' daughter is she verily,
Who when her eyes first looked upon the sun
Was fain to end her life but new begun,
For he had vowed to leave but men alone
Sprung from his loins when he from earth was gone.

"Therefore he bade one leave her in the wood,
And let wild things deal with her as they might,
But this being done, some cruel god thought good
To save her beauty in the world's despite:
Folk say that her, so delicate and white
As now she is, a rough, root-grubbing bear
Amidst her shapeless cubs at first did rear.

"In course of time the woodfolk slew her nurse,
And to their rude abode the youngling brought,
And reared her up to be a kingdom's curse,
Who grown a woman, of no kingdom thought,
But armed and swift, 'mid beasts destruction wrought,
[Pg 193]
Nor spared two shaggy centaur kings to slay,
To whom her body seemed an easy prey.

"So to this city, led by fate, she came
Whom known by signs, whereof I cannot tell,
King Schœneus for his child at last did claim,
Nor otherwise since that day doth she dwell,
Sending too many a noble soul to hell.—
What! thine eyes glisten! what then, thinkest thou
Her shining head unto the yoke to bow?

"Listen, my son, and love some other maid,
For she the saffron gown[296] will never wear,
And on no flower-strewn couch shall she be laid,
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover's ear:
Yet if of Death thou hast not any fear,
Yea, rather, if thou lovest him utterly,
Thou still may'st woo her ere thou comest to die,

"Like him that on this day thou sawest lie dead;
For, fearing as I deem the sea-born one,[297]
The maid has vowed e'en such a man to wed
As in the course her swift feet can outrun,
But whoso fails herein, his days are done:

He came the nighest that was slain to-day,
Although with him I deem she did but play.

"Behold, such mercy Atalanta gives
To those that long to win her loveliness;
Be wise! be sure that many a maid there lives
Gentler than she, of beauty little less,
Whose swimming eyes thy loving words shall bless,
When in some garden, knee set close to knee,
Thou sing'st the song that love may teach to thee."

[Pg 194]

So to the hunter spake that ancient man,
And left him for his own home presently:
But he turned round, and through the moonlight wan
Reached the thick wood, and there, 'twixt tree and tree
Distraught he passed the long night feverishly,
'Twixt sleep and waking, and at dawn arose
To wage hot war against his speechless foes.

There to the hart's flank seemed his shaft to grow,
As panting down the broad green glades he flew,
There by his horn the Dryads[298] well might know
His thrust against the bear's heart had been true,
And there Adonis' bane[299] his javelin slew,
But still in vain through rough and smooth he went,
For none the more his restlessness was spent.

So wandering, he to Argive[300] cities came,
And in the lists with valiant men he stood,
And by great deeds he won him praise and fame,
And heaps of wealth for little-valued blood;
But none of all these things, or life, seemed good
Unto his heart, where still unsatisfied
A ravenous longing warred with fear and pride.

Therefore it happed when but a month had gone
Since he had left King Schœneus' city old,
In hunting-gear again, again alone
The forest-bordered meads did he behold,
Where still mid thoughts of August's quivering gold
Folk hoed the wheat, and clipped the vine in trust
Of faint October's purple-foaming must.[301]

[Pg 195]

And once again he passed the peaceful gate,
While to his beating heart his lips did lie,
That, owning not victorious love and fate,
Said, half aloud, "And here too must I try,
To win of alien men the mastery,
And gather for my head fresh meed of fame,
And cast new glory on my father's name."

In spite of that, how beat his heart, when first
Folk said to him, "And art thou come to see
That which still makes our city's name accurst
Among all mothers for its cruelty?
Then know indeed that fate is good to thee
Because to-morrow a new luckless one
Against the whitefoot maid is pledged to run."

So on the morrow with no curious eyes
As once he did, that piteous sight he saw,
Nor did that wonder in his heart arise
As toward the goal the conquering maid 'gan draw,
Nor did he gaze upon her eyes with awe,
Too full the pain of longing filled his heart
For fear or wonder there to have a part.

But O, how long the night was ere it went!
How long it was before the dawn begun
Showed to the wakening birds the sun's intent
That not in darkness should the world be done!
And then, and then, how long before the sun
Bade silently the toilers of the earth
Get forth to fruitless cares or empty mirth!

And long it seemed that in the market-place
He stood and saw the chaffering folk go by,
[Pg 196] Ere from the ivory throne King Schœneus' face
Looked down upon the murmur royally,
But then came trembling that the time was nigh
When he midst pitying looks his love must claim,
And jeering voices must salute his name.

But as the throng he pierced to gain the throne,
His alien face distraught and anxious told
What hopeless errand he was bound upon,
And, each to each, folk whispered to behold
His godlike limbs; nay, and one woman old
As he went by must pluck him by the sleeve
And pray him yet that wretched love to leave.

For sidling up she said, "Canst thou live twice,
Fair son? canst thou have joyful youth again,
That thus goest to the sacrifice,
Thyself the victim? nay then, all in vain,
Thy mother bore her longing and her pain,
And one more maiden on the earth must dwell
Hopeless of joy, nor fearing death and hell.

"O fool, thou knowest not the compact then
That with the three-formed goddess she has made
To keep her from the loving lips of men,
And in no saffron gown to be arrayed,
And therewithal with glory to be paid,
And love of her the moonlit river sees
White 'gainst the shadow of the formless trees.

"Come back, and I myself will pray for thee
Unto the sea-born framer of delights,
To give thee her who on the earth may be
[Pg 197] The fairest stirrer-up to death and fights,
To quench with hopeful days and joyous nights
The flame that doth thy youthful heart consume:
Come back, nor give thy beauty to the tomb."

How should he listen to her earnest speech?
Words, such as he not once or twice had said
Unto himself, whose meaning scarce could reach
The firm abode of that sad hardihead—
He turned about, and through the market stead
Swiftly he passed, until before the throne
In the cleared space he stood at last alone.

Then said the King, "Stranger, what dost thou here?
Have any of my folk done ill to thee?
Or art thou of the forest men in fear?
Or art thou of the sad fraternity
Who still will strive my daughter's mates to be,
Staking their lives to win to earthly bliss,
The lonely maid, the friend of Artemis?"

"O King," he said, "thou sayest the word indeed;
Nor will I quit the strife till I have won
My sweet delight, or death to end my need.
And know that I am called Milanion,
Of King Amphidamas the well-loved son:
So fear not that to thy old name, O King,
Much loss or shame my victory will bring."

"Nay, Prince," said Schœneus, "welcome to this land
Thou wert indeed, if thou wert here to try
Thy strength 'gainst some one mighty of his hand;
[Pg 198] Nor would we grudge thee well-won mastery.
But now, why wilt thou come to me to die,
And at my door lay down thy luckless head,
Swelling the band of the unhappy dead,

"Whose curses even now my heart doth fear?
Lo, I am old, and know what life can be,
And what a bitter thing is death anear.
O Son! be wise, and hearken unto me,

And if no other can be dear to thee,
At least as now, yet is the world full wide,
And bliss in seeming hopeless hearts may hide:

"But if thou losest life, then all is lost."
"Nay, King," Milanion said, "thy words are vain.
Doubt not that I have counted well the cost.
But say, on what day will thou that I gain
Fulfilled delight, or death to end my pain?
Right glad were I if it could be to-day,
And all my doubts at rest forever lay."

"Nay," said King Schœneus, "thus it shall not be,
But rather shalt thou let a month go by,
And weary with thy prayers for victory
What god thou know'st the kindest and most nigh.
So doing, still perchance thou shalt not die:
And with my good-will wouldst thou have the maid,
For of the equal gods I grow afraid.

"And until then, O Prince, be thou my guest,
And all these troublous things awhile forget."
"Nay," said he, "couldst thou give my soul good rest,
And on mine head a sleepy garland set,
[Pg 199] Then had I 'scaped the meshes of the net,
Nor shouldst thou hear from me another word;
But now, make sharp thy fearful heading sword.

"Yet will I do what son of man may do,
And promise all the gods may most desire,
That to myself I may at least be true;
And on that day my heart and limbs so tire,
With utmost strain and measureless desire,
That, at the worst, I may but fall asleep
When in the sunlight round that sword shall sweep."

He went with that, nor anywhere would bide,
But unto Argos[302] restlessly did wend;
And there, as one who lays all hope aside,
Because the leech has said his life must end,
Silent farewell he bade to foe and friend,
And took his way unto the restless sea,
For there he deemed his rest and help might be.

Upon the shore of Argolis there stands
A temple to the goddess that he sought,
That, turned unto the lion-bearing lands,
Fenced from the east, of cold winds hath no thought,
Though to no homestead there the sheaves are brought,
No groaning press torments the close-clipped murk,
Lonely the fane stands, far from all men's work.

Pass through a close, set thick with myrtle-trees,
Through the brass doors that guard the holy place,
And entering, hear the washing of the seas
That twice a day rise high above the base,
[Pg 200] And with the southwest urging them, embrace
The marble feet of her that standeth there,
That shrink not, naked though they be and fair.

Small is the fane through which the sea-wind sings
About Queen Venus'[303] well-wrought image white,
But hung around are many precious things,
The gifts of those who, longing for delight,
Have hung them there within the goddess' sight,
And in return have taken at her hands
The living treasures of the Grecian lands.

And thither now has come Milanion,
And showed unto the priests' wide-open eyes
Gifts fairer than all those that there have shown,
Silk cloths, inwrought with Indian fantasies,
And bowls inscribed with sayings of the wise
Above the deeds of foolish living things,

And mirrors fit to be the gifts of kings.

And now before the Sea-born One he stands,
By the sweet veiling smoke made dim and soft,
And while the incense trickles from his hands,
And while the odorous smoke-wreaths hang aloft,
Thus doth he pray to her: "O Thou, who oft
Hast holpen[304] man and maid in their distress,
Despise me not for this my wretchedness!

"O goddess, among us who dwell below,
Kings and great men, great for a little while,
Have pity on the lowly heads that bow,
Nor hate the hearts that love them without guile;
Wilt thou be worse than these, and is thy smile
[Pg 201] A vain device of him who set thee here,
An empty dream of some artificer?

"O great one, some men love, and are ashamed;
Some men are weary of the bonds of love;
Yea, and by some men lightly art thou blamed,
That from thy toils their lives they cannot move,
And 'mid the ranks of men their manhood prove.
Alas! O goddess, if thou slayest me
What new immortal can I serve but thee?

"Think then, will it bring honor to thy head
If folk say, 'Everything aside he cast
And to all fame and honor was he dead,
And to his one hope now is dead at last,
Since all unholpen he is gone and past:
Ah, the gods love not man, for certainly,
He to his helper did not cease to cry."

"Nay, but thou wilt help; they who died before
Not single-hearted as I deem came here,
Therefore unthanked they laid their gifts before
Thy stainless feet, still shivering with their fear,
Lest in their eyes their true thought might appear,
Who sought to be the lords of that fair town,
Dreaded of men and winners of renown.

"O Queen, thou knowest I pray not for this:
O, set us down together in some place
Where not a voice can break our heaven of bliss,
Where naught but rocks and I can see her face,
Softening beneath the marvel of thy grace,
Where not a foot our vanished steps can track,—
The golden age, the golden age come back!

[Pg 202] "O fairest, hear me now, who do thy will,
Plead for thy rebel that she be not slain,
But live and love and be thy servant still:
Ah, give her joy and take away my pain,
And thus two long-enduring servants gain.
An easy thing this is to do for me,
What need of my vain words to weary thee!

"But none the less this place will I not leave
Until I needs must go my death to meet,
Or at thy hands some happy sign receive
That in great joy we twain may one day greet
Thy presence here and kiss thy silver feet,
Such as we deem thee, fair beyond all words,
Victorious o'er our servants and our lords."

Then from the altar back a space he drew,
But from the Queen turned not his face away,
But 'gainst a pillar leaned, until the blue
That arched the sky, at ending of the day,
Was turned to ruddy gold and changing gray,
And clear, but low, the nigh-ebbed windless sea
In the still evening murmured ceaselessly.

And there he stood when all the sun was down,
Nor had he moved, when the dim golden light,

Like the far lustre of a godlike town,
Had left the world to seeming hopeless night,
Nor would he move the more when wan moonlight
Streamed through the pillars for a little while,
And lighted up the white Queen's changeless smile.

Naught noted he the shallow flowing sea
As step by step it set the wrack a-swim,
[Pg 203]
The yellow torchlight nothing noted he
Wherein with fluttering gown and half-bared limb
The temple damsels sung their midnight hymn,
And naught the doubled stillness of the fane
When they were gone and all was hushed again.

But when the waves had touched the marble base,
And steps the fish swim over twice a day,
The dawn beheld him sunken in his place
Upon the floor; and sleeping there he lay,
Not heeding aught the little jets of spray
The roughened sea brought nigh, across him cast,
For as one dead all thought from him had passed.

Yet long before the sun had showed his head,
Long ere the varied hangings on the wall
Had gained once more their blue and green and red,
He rose as one some well-known sign doth call
When war upon the city's gates doth fall,
And scarce like one fresh risen out of sleep,
He 'gan again his broken watch to keep.

Then he turned round; not for the sea-gull's cry
That wheeled above the temple in his flight,
Not for the fresh south-wind that lovingly
Breathed on the new-born day and dying night,
But some strange hope 'twixt fear and great delight
Drew round his face, now flushed, now pale and wan,
And still constrained his eyes the sea to scan.

Now a faint light lit up the southern sky,
Not sun or moon, for all the world was gray,
But this a bright cloud seemed, that drew anigh,
[Pg 204]
Lighting the dull waves that beneath it lay
As toward the temple still it took its way,
And still grew greater, till Milanion
Saw naught for dazzling light that round him shone.

But as he staggered with his arms outspread,
Delicious unnamed odors breathed around,
For languid happiness he bowed his head,
And with wet eyes sank down upon the ground,
Nor wished for aught, nor any dream he found
To give him reason for that happiness,
Or make him ask more knowledge of his bliss.

At last his eyes were cleared, and he could see
Through happy tears the goddess face to face
With that faint image of Divinity,
Whose well-wrought smile and dainty changeless grace
Until that morn so gladdened all the place;
Then he unwitting cried aloud her name,
And covered up his eyes for fear and shame.

But through the stillness he her voice could hear
Piercing his heart with joy scarce bearable,
That said, "Milanion, wherefore dost thou fear?
I am not hard to those who love me well;
List to what I a second time will tell,
And thou mayest hear perchance, and live to save
The cruel maiden from a loveless grave.

"See, by my feet three golden apples lie—
Such fruit among the heavy roses falls,
Such fruit my watchful damsels carefully
Store up within the best loved of my walls,
[Pg 205]
Ancient Damascus,[305] where the lover calls
Above my unseen head, and faint and light

The rose-leaves flutter round me in the night.

"And note, that these are not alone most fair
With heavenly gold, but longing strange they bring
Unto the hearts of men, who will not care,
Beholding these, for any once-loved thing
Till round the shining sides their fingers cling.
And thou shalt see thy well-girt swiftfoot maid
By sight of these amid her glory stayed.

"For bearing these within a scrip with thee,
When first she heads thee from the starting-place
Cast down the first one for her eyes to see,
And when she turns aside make on apace,
And if again she heads thee in the race
Spare not the other two to cast aside
If she not long enough behind will bide.

"Farewell, and when has come the happy time
That she Diana's raiment must unbind
And all the world seems blessed with Saturn's[306] clime,
And thou with eager arms about her twined
Beholdest first her gray eyes growing kind,
Surely, O trembler, thou shalt scarcely then
Forget the Helper of unhappy men."

Milanion raised his head at this last word,
For now so soft and kind she seemed to be
No longer of her Godhead was he feared;
Too late he looked, for nothing could he see
But the white image glimmering doubtfully
[Pg 206] In the departing twilight cold and gray,
And those three apples on the steps that lay.

These then he caught up quivering with delight,
Yet fearful lest it all might be a dream,
And though aweary with the watchful night,
And sleepless nights of longing, still did deem
He could not sleep; but yet the first sunbeam
That smote the fane across the heaving deep
Shone on him laid in calm untroubled sleep.

But little ere the noontide did he rise,
And why he felt so happy scarce could tell
Until the gleaming apples met his eyes.
Then, leaving the fair place where this befell,
Oft he looked back as one who loved it well,
Then homeward to the haunts of men 'gan wend
To bring all things unto a happy end.

Now has the lingering month at last gone by,
Again are all folk round the running-place,
Nor other seems the dismal pageantry
Than heretofore, but that another face
Looks o'er the smooth course ready for the race,
For now, beheld of all, Milanion
Stands on the spot he twice has looked upon.

But yet—what change is this that holds the maid?
Does she indeed see in his glittering eye
More than disdain of the sharp shearing blade,
Some happy hope of help and victory?
The others seemed to say, "We come to die,
[Pg 207] Look down upon us for a little while,
That, dead, we may bethink us of thy smile."

But he—what look of mastery was this
He cast on her? why were his lips so red?
Why was his face so flushed with happiness?
So looks not one who deems himself but dead,
E'en if to death he bows a willing head;
So rather looks a god well pleased to find
Some earthly damsel fashioned to his mind.

Why must she drop her lids before his gaze,
And even as she casts adown her eyes
Redden to note his eager glance of praise,
And wish that she were clad in other guise?
Why must the memory to her heart arise
Of things unnoticed when they first were heard,
Some lover's song, some answering maiden's word?

What makes these longings, vague, without a name,
And this vain pity never felt before,
This sudden languor, this contempt of fame,
This tender sorrow for the time past o'er,
These doubts that grow each minute more and more?
Why does she tremble as the time grows near,
And weak defeat and woful victory fear?

But while she seemed to hear her beating heart,
Above their heads the trumpet blast rang out,
And forth they sprang; and she must play her part;
Then flew her white feet, knowing not a doubt,
Though, slackening once, she turned her head about,
But then she cried aloud and faster fled
Than e'er before, and all men deemed him dead.

[Pg 208]

But with no sound he raised aloft his hand,
And thence what seemed a ray of light there flew
And past the maid rolled on along the sand;
Then trembling she her feet together drew,
And in her heart a strong desire there grew
To have the toy; some god she thought had given
That gift to her, to make of earth a heaven.

Then from the course with eager steps she ran,
And in her odorous bosom laid the gold.
But when she turned again, the great-limbed man
Now well ahead she failed not to behold,
And, mindful of her glory waxing cold,
Sprang up and followed him in hot pursuit,
Though with one hand she touched the golden fruit.

Note, too, the bow that she was wont to bear
She laid aside to grasp the glittering prize,
And o'er her shoulder from the quiver fair
Three arrows fell and lay before her eyes
Unnoticed, as amidst the people's cries
She sprang to head the strong Milanion,
Who now the turning-post had well-nigh won.

But as he set his mighty hand on it
White fingers underneath his own were laid,
And white limbs from his dazzled eyes did flit;
Then he the second fruit cast by the maid,
But she ran on awhile, then as afraid
Wavered and stopped, and turned and made no stay,
Until the globe with its bright fellow lay.

Then, as a troubled glance she cast around,
Now far ahead the Argive could she see,

[Pg 209]

And in her garment's hem one hand she wound
To keep the double prize, and strenuously
Sped o'er the course, and little doubt had she
To win the day, though now but scanty space
Was left betwixt him and the winning-place.

Short was the way unto such winged feet,
Quickly she gained upon him, till at last
He turned about her eager eyes to meet
And from his hand the third fair apple cast.
She wavered not, but turned and ran so fast
After the prize that should her bliss fulfil,
That in her hand it lay ere it was still.

Nor did she rest, but turned about to win,
Once more, an unblest woful victory—
And yet—and yet—why does her breath begin
To fail her, and her feet drag heavily?

Why fails she now to see if far or nigh
The goal is? why do her gray eyes grow dim?
Why do these tremors run through every limb?

She spreads her arms abroad some stay to find,
Else must she fall, indeed, and findeth this,
A strong man's arms about her body twined.
Nor may she shudder now to feel his kiss,
So wrapped she is in new unbroken bliss:
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,
She weeps glad tears for all her glory done.

Shatter the trumpet, hew adown the posts!
Upon the brazen altar break the sword,
[Pg 210]
And scatter incense to appease the ghosts
Of those who died here by their own award.
Bring forth the image of the mighty Lord,
And her who unseen o'er the runners hung,
And did a deed forever to be sung.

Here are the gathered folk, make no delay,
Open King Schœneus' well-filled treasury,
Bring out the gifts long hid from light of day,
The golden bowls o'erwrought with imagery,
Gold chains, and unguents brought from over sea,
The saffron gown the old Phœnician[307] brought,
Within the temple of the Goddess wrought.

O ye, O damsels, who shall never see
Her, that Love's servant bringeth now to you,
Returning from another victory,
In some cool bower do all that now is due!
Since she in token of her service new
Shall give to Venus offerings rich enow,
Her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow.

[Pg 211]

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughtèr,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old sailòr,
Had sailed the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast;
[Pg 212]
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain,
The vessel in its strength;

She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale,
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
O say, what may it be?"
"'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!"—
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
O say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,
O say, what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
[Pg 213]
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave,
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Towards the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between,
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf,
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
[Pg 214]
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt-sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,[308]
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[309] 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 arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
[Pg 215]
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 to the tower of the church,
Up 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,—
Up 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.

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
[Pg 216]
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the 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!

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,
[Pg 217]
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[310] 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
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord[311] 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.
[Pg 218]
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 farmyard 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.

[Pg 219]

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,[312]
Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,[313]
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,[314]—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
[Pg 220] Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus[315] round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Mænads[316] sang:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay,[317]—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
  Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
  Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
    By the women of Marblehead!

[Pg 221] Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
  "Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
  Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
    By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting, far and near:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,—
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
[Pg 222] Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him! why should we?"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

BARCLAY OF URY

Up the streets of Aberdeen[318]
By the kirk[319] and college green
Rode the Laird[320] of Ury.
Close behind him, close beside,
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,
Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,
Jeered at him the serving-girl,
Prompt to please her master;
And the begging carlin,[321] late
Fed and clothed at Ury's gate,
Cursed him as he passed her.

Yet, with calm and stately mien,
Up the streets of Aberdeen
Came he slowly riding;
[Pg 223] And, to all he saw and heard,
Answering not with bitter word,
Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broadswords swinging,
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,
Loose and free and froward;
Quoth the foremost, 'Ride him down!
Push him! prick him! through the town
Drive the Quaker coward!'

But from out the thickening crowd
Cried a sudden voice and loud:
'Barclay! Ho! a Barclay!'
And the old man at his side
Saw a comrade, battle tried,
Scarred and sunburned darkly,

Who with ready weapon bare,

Fronting to the troopers there,
Cried aloud: 'God save us,
Call ye coward him who stood
Ankle deep in Lützen's[322] blood,
With the brave Gustavus?'

'Nay, I do not need thy sword,
Comrade mine,' said Ury's lord;
'Put it up, I pray thee:
Passive to his holy will,
Trust I in my Master still,
Even though He slay me.

'Pledges of thy love and faith,
Proved on many a field of death,
Not by me are needed.'
[Pg 224] Marvelled much that henchman bold,
That his laird, so stout of old,
Now so meekly pleaded.

'Woe's the day!' he sadly said,
With a slowly shaking head,
And a look of pity;
'Ury's honest lord reviled,
Mock of knave and sport of child,
In his own good city!

'Speak the word, and, master mine,
As we charged on Tilly's[323] line,
And his Walloon[324] lancers,
Smiting through their midst we'll teach
Civil look and decent speech
To these boyish prancers!'

'Marvel not, mine ancient friend,
Like beginning, like the end,'
Quoth the Laird of Ury;
'Is the sinful servant more
Than his gracious Lord who bore
Bonds and stripes in Jewry?

'Give me joy that in his name
I can bear, with patient frame,
All these vain ones offer;
While for them He suffereth long,
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,
Scoffing with the scoffer?

'Happier I, with loss of all,
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,
With few friends to greet me,
[Pg 225] Than when reeve and squire were seen,
Riding out from Aberdeen,
With bared heads to meet me.

'When each goodwife, o'er and o'er,
Blessed me as I passed her door;
And the snooded[325] daughter,
Through her casement glancing down,
Smiled on him who bore renown
From red fields of slaughter.

'Hard to feel the stranger's scoff,
Hard the old friend's falling off,
Hard to learn forgiving;
But the Lord his own rewards,
And his love with theirs accords,
Warm and fresh and living.

'Through this dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God's own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking!'

So the Laird of Ury said,
Turning slow his horse's head
Towards the Tolbooth[326] prison,
Where, through iron gates, he heard
Poor disciples of the Word
Preach of Christ arisen!

Not in vain, Confessor old,
Unto us the tale is told
Of thy day of trial;
[Pg 226] Every age on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways
Pours its seven-fold vial.

Happy he whose inward ear,
Angel comfortings can hear,
O'er the rabble's laughter;
And while Hatred's fagots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world's wide fallow[327];
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead
Reap the harvests yellow.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And, on midnight's sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow!

BARBARA FRIETCHIE

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

[Pg 227] Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep,

Fair as the garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall
When Lee marched over the mountain-wall;

Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Of noon looked down, and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced; the old flag met his sight.

'Halt!'—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.
'Fire!'—out blazed the rifle-blast.

[Pg 228]

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf.

She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

'Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag,' she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;

The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;

'Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!' he said.

All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet:

All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;

And through the hill-gaps sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.

[Pg 229]

Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave,
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!

Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

[Pg 230]

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

GRANDMOTHER'S STORY OF BUNKER HILL BATTLE

As she saw it from the belfry

'Tis like stirring living embers when, at eighty, one remembers
All the achings and the quakings of "the times that tried men's souls [328];"
When I talk of *Whig* and *Tory*,[329] when I tell the *Rebel* story,
To you the words are ashes, but to me they're burning coals.

I had heard the muskets' rattle of the April running battle[330];
Lord Percy's hunted soldiers, I can see their red coats still;
But a deadly chill comes o'er me, as the day looms up before me,
When a thousand men lay bleeding on the slopes of Bunker's Hill.

'Twas a peaceful summer's morning, when the first thing gave us warning.
Was the booming of the cannon from the river and the shore:
"Child," says grandma, "what's the matter, what is all this noise and clatter?
Have those scalping Indian devils come to murder us once more?"

[Pg 231]

Poor old soul! my sides were shaking in the midst of all my quaking,
To hear her talk of Indians when the guns began to roar:
She had seen the burning village, and the slaughter and the pillage,

When the Mohawks[331] killed her father with their bullets through his door.

Then I said, "Now, dear old granny, don't you fret and worry any,
For I'll soon come back and tell you whether this is work or play;
There can't be mischief in it, so I won't be gone a minute"—
For a minute then I started. I was gone the livelong day.

No time for bodice-lacing or for looking-glass grimacing;
Down my hair went as I hurried, tumbling half-way to my heels;
God forbid your ever knowing, when there's blood around her flowing,
How the lonely, helpless daughter of a quiet household feels!

In the street I heard a thumping; and I knew it was the stumping
Of the Corporal, our old neighbor, on the wooden leg he wore,
With a knot of women round him,—it was lucky I had found him,
So I followed with the others, and the Corporal marched before.

[Pg 232]

They were making for the steeple,—the old soldier and his people;
The pigeons circled round us as we climbed the creaking stair,
Just across the narrow river—Oh, so close it made me shiver!—
Stood a fortress on the hill-top that but yesterday was bare.

Not slow our eyes to find it; well we knew who stood behind it,
Though the earthwork hid them from us, and the stubborn walls were dumb:
Here were sister, wife, and mother, looking wild upon each other,
And their lips were white with terror as they said, THE HOUR HAS COME!

The morning slowly wasted, not a morsel had we tasted,
And our heads were almost splitting with the cannons' deafening thrill,
When a figure tall and stately round the rampart strode sedately;
It was PRESCOTT, one since told me; he commanded on the hill.

Every woman's heart grew bigger when we saw his manly figure,
With the banyan[332] buckled round it, standing up so straight and tall;
[Pg 233]
Like a gentleman of leisure who is strolling out for pleasure,
Through the storm of shells and cannon-shot he walked around the wall.

At eleven the streets were swarming, for the red-coats' ranks were forming;
At noon in marching order they were moving to the piers;
How the bayonets gleamed and glistened, as we looked far down, and listened
To the trampling and the drum-beat of the belted grenadiers!

At length the men have started, with a cheer (it seemed faint-hearted),
In their scarlet regimentals, with their knapsacks on their backs,
And the reddening, rippling water, as after a sea-fight's slaughter,
Round the barges gliding onward blushed like blood along their tracks.

So they crossed to the other border, and again they formed in order;
And the boats came back for soldiers, came for soldiers, soldiers still:
The time seemed everlasting to us women faint and fasting,—
At last they're moving, marching, marching proudly up the hill.

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We can see the bright steel glancing all along the lines advancing—
Now the front rank fires a volley—they have thrown away their shot;
For behind their earthwork lying, all the balls above them flying,
Our people need not hurry; so they wait and answer not.

Then the Corporal, our old cripple (he would swear sometimes and tipple),—
He had heard the bullets whistle (in the old French war) before,—
Calls out in words of jeering, just as if they all were hearing,—
And his wooden leg thumps fiercely on the dusty belfry floor:—

"Oh! fire away, ye villains, and earn King George's shillin's,
But ye'll waste a ton of powder afore a 'rebel' falls;
You may bang the dirt and welcome, they're as safe as Dan'l Malcolm[333]
Ten foot beneath the gravestone that you've splintered with your balls!"

In the hush of expectation, in the awe and trepidation
Of the dread approaching moment, we are well-nigh breathless all;
Though the rotten bars are failing on the rickety belfry railing,
We are crowding up against them like the waves against a wall.

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Just a glimpse (the air is clearer), they are nearer,—nearer,—nearer,
When a flash—a curling smoke-wreath—then a crash—the steeple shakes—
The deadly truce is ended; the tempest's shroud is rended;
Like a morning mist is gathered, like a thunder-cloud it breaks!

O the sight our eyes discover as the blue-black smoke blows over!
The red-coats stretched in windrows as a mower rakes his hay;
Here a scarlet heap is lying, there a headlong crowd is flying
Like a billow that has broken and is shivered into spray.

Then we cried, "The troops are routed! they are beat—it can't be doubted!
God be thanked, the fight is over!"—Ah! the grim old soldier's smile!
"Tell us, tell us why you look so?" (we could hardly speak we shook so),—
"Are they beaten? *Are* they beaten? ARE they beaten?"—"Wait a while."

O the trembling and the terror! for too soon we saw our error:
They are baffled, not defeated; we have driven them back in vain;
And the columns that were scattered, round the colors that were tattered,
Toward the sullen silent fortress turn their belted breasts again.

[Pg 236]

All at once, as we were gazing, lo! the roofs of Charlestown blazing!
They have fired the harmless village; in an hour it will be down!
The Lord in Heaven confound them, rain his fire and brimstone round them,—
The robbing, murdering red-coats, that would burn a peaceful town!

They are marching, stern and solemn; we can see each massive column
As they near the naked earth-mound with the slanting walls so steep.
Have our soldiers got faint-hearted, and in noiseless haste departed?
Are they panic-struck and helpless? Are they palsied or asleep?

Now! the walls they're almost under! scarce a rod the foes asunder!
Not a firelock flashed against them! up the earthwork they will swarm!
But the words have scarce been spoken when the ominous calm is broken,
And a bellowing crash has emptied all the vengeance of the storm!

So again, with murderous slaughter, pelted backwards to the water,
Fly Pigot's running heroes and the frightened braves of Howe;
And we shout, "At last they're done for, it's their barges they have run for:
They are beaten, beaten, beaten; and the battle's over now!"

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And we looked, poor timid creatures, on the rough old soldier's features,
Our lips afraid to question, but he knew what we would ask:
"Not sure," he said; "keep quiet,—once more, I guess, they'll try it—
Here's damnation to the cut-throats!" then he handed me his flask,

Saying, "Gal, you're looking shaky; have a drop of Old Jamaiky;
I'm afeared there'll be more trouble afore the job is done;"
So I took one scorching swallow; dreadful faint I felt and hollow,
Standing there from early morning when the firing was begun.

All through those hours of trial I had watched a calm clock dial,
As the hands kept creeping, creeping,—they were creeping round to four,
When the old man said, "They're forming with their bayonets fixed for storming:
It's the death-grip that's a-coming,—they will try the works once more."

With brazen trumpets blaring, the flames behind them glaring,
The deadly wall before them, in close array they come;

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Still onward, upward toiling, like a dragon's fold uncoiling,—
Like the rattlesnake's shrill warning the reverberating drum!

Over heaps all torn and gory—shall I tell the fearful story,
How they surged above the breastwork, as a sea breaks over a deck;
How, driven, yet scarce defeated, our worn-out men retreated,
With their powder-horns all emptied, like the swimmers from a wreck?

It has all been told and painted; as for me, they say I fainted,
And the wooden-legged old Corporal stumped with me down the stair:
When I woke from dreams affrighted the evening lamps were lighted,—
On the floor a youth was lying; his bleeding breast was bare.

And I heard through all the flurry, "Send for Warren! hurry! hurry!
Tell him here's a soldier bleeding, and he'll come and dress his wound!"
Ah, we knew not till the morrow told its tale of death and sorrow,
How the starlight found him stiffened on the dark and bloody ground.

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Who the youth was, what his name was, where the place from which he came was,
Who had brought him from the battle, and had left him at our door,
He could not speak to tell us; but 'twas one of our brave fellows,
As the homespun plainly showed us which the dying soldier wore.

For they all thought he was dying, as they gathered round him crying,—
And they said, "Oh, how they'll miss him!" and, "What *will* his mother do?"
Then, his eyelids just unclosing like a child's that has been dozing,
He faintly murmured, "Mother!"—and—I saw his eyes were blue.

—"Why, grandma, how you're winking!"—Ah, my child, it sets me thinking
Of a story not like this one. Well, he somehow lived along;
So we came to know each other, and I nursed him like a—mother,
Till at last he stood before me, tall, and rosy-cheeked, and strong.

And we sometimes walked together in the pleasant summer weather;
—"Please to tell us what his name was?"—Just your own, my little dear.
There's his picture Copley[334] painted: we became so well acquainted,
That,—in short, that's why I'm grandma, and you children are all here!"

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NOTES

WILLIAM COWPER

William Cowper was born at Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, England, in 1731. He was educated first at a private school and afterwards at Westminster in London. He studied law, but his progress in the profession was blocked because of an attack of insanity brought on in 1763 by nervousness over an oral examination for a clerkship in the House of Commons. After fifteen months he recovered and went to live at Huntingdon, where he met the Unwin family and began what was to be a lifelong friendship with Mrs. Unwin. Upon Mr. Unwin's death in 1767, Cowper moved with Mrs. Unwin to Olney, passing a secluded life there until 1786. In 1773 he suffered a second attack of melancholia, which lasted sixteen months. Soon after his recovery he coöperated with the Rev. John Newton in writing the well-known *Olney Hymns* (1779). In 1782 he published his first volume of poems, and a second volume followed in 1785, containing *The Task*, *Tirocinium*, and the ballad of *John Gilpin*. A translation of Homer was completed in 1791. After 1791 his reason became hopelessly deranged, and he passed the time until his death in 1800 in utter misery.

Cowper was a man of kind and gentle character, a lover of nature in her milder aspects, and especially fond of animals. As one of the forerunners of the so-called Romantic movement in English poetry, his name is significant. Though at his best in work of a descriptive or satiric kind,
[Pg 242] he was also gifted with a subtle humor which appears frequently in many short tales and ballads. A good biography of Cowper is that by Goldwin Smith in the English Men of Letters Series.

The Diverting History of John Gilpin (Page 1)

The story of John Gilpin was told to Cowper by his friend, Lady Austen, who had heard it when a child. The poet, upon whom the tale made a deep impression, eventually turned it into this ballad, which was first published anonymously in the *Public Advertiser* for November 14, 1782. It became popular at once, and is to-day probably the most widely known of the author's works. It is written in the conventional ballad metre, and preserves many expressions characteristic of the primitive English ballad style.

[1] 3. **Eke**; also.

[2] 11. **Edmonton** is a suburb a few miles directly north of London.

[3] 16. **After we.** John Gilpin's wife does not hesitate to sacrifice grammar for the sake of rime.

[4] 23. **Calender**; one who operates a calender, a machine for giving cloth or paper a smooth, glossy surface.

[5] 39. **Agog**; eager.

[6] 44. **Cheapside** was one of the most important of the old London streets.

[7] 49. The **saddletree** is the frame of the saddle.

[8] 115. **Carries weight.** The bottles seem to resemble the weights carried in horse races by the jockeys.

[9] 133. **Islington**, now part of London, was then one of its suburbs.

[10] 152. **Ware** is a town about fifteen miles north of London.

[11] 178. **Pin**; mood.

[12] 222. **Amain**; at full speed.

[Pg 243] [13] 236. **The hue and cry**; a term used to describe the rousing of the people in pursuit of a rogue.

ROBERT BURNS

Robert Burns was born of peasant parentage near Ayr, Scotland, on January 25, 1759. Up to the time when he was twenty-five years old he lived and worked on his father's farm, except for two short absences in near-by towns. While he was very young, he formed bad habits, from which he could never free himself, and which eventually wrecked his career. He was frequently in love, and many of the resulting entanglements brought him little but sorrow. In 1786, as a result of an unfortunate affair with Jean Armour, he determined to sail for America, and in order to raise the necessary money, published a volume of poems for which he was paid twenty pounds. The book was received with enthusiasm and so elated Burns with his success, that he decided to remain in Scotland. He accepted an invitation to Edinburgh, where he was entertained royally by literary circles. However, he was compelled to return to farming, and after marrying Jean Armour took a tenancy at Ellisland in 1788. A little later he was appointed exciseman, but his convivial tendencies were undermining his health, and he found his duties hard to attend to. He moved to Dumfries, where he died in poverty in 1796.

Burns as a writer of songs, especially of love lyrics, is unsurpassed. He touched the depths of human passion as few have ever done, and has made his poetry live in the hearts of the people. He is also the poet of Scottish peasant life, the enemy of oppression and tyranny, and the supporter of patriotism. Failure though he was from a worldly point of view, he was more unfortunate than culpable, and deserves our pity rather than our censure.

[Pg 244] Carlyle's *Essay on Burns* gives an excellent idea of the character and work of the poet.

TAM O'SHANTER (Page 11)

Written in 1790 in a single day and first published in 1791 as a contribution to Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland,* it has been called "a masterpiece of Scottish character, Scottish humor, Scottish witch-lore, and Scottish imagination." Burns himself considered it to be his finest poem.

[14] 1. **Chapman billies**; pedlar fellows.

[15] 2. **Drouthy**; thirsty.

[16] 4. **Tak the gate**; take the road.

[17] 5. **Nappy**; liquor.

[18] 6. **Fou**; tipsy.

[19] 6. **Unco**; very.

[20] 8. **Slaps**; gates in fences.

[21] 14. **Frae**; from.

[22] 14. **Ayr**; a town in Ayrshire, Scotland, on the west coast about thirty miles south of Glasgow. Near it is the birthplace of Burns.

[23] 19. **Skellum**; ne'er-do-well.

[24] 20. **Blethering**; talking nonsense.

[25] 20. **Blellum**; babbler.

[26] 23. **Ilka**; every.

[27] 23. **Melder**; corn or grain sent to the mill to be ground.

[28] 25. **Ca'd**; driven.

[29] 30. **Doon**; a river near Ayr immortalized in Burns's song, "Ye banks and braes of bonny Doon."

[30] 31. **Warlocks**; wizards.

[31] 31. **Mirk**; dark.

[32] 32. **Alloway**; a small town near Ayr, Scotland.

[33] 32. **Kirk**; church.

[34] 33. **Gars me greet**; makes me weep.

[35] 38. **Planted**; fixed.

[36] 39. **Ingle**; fireside.

[37] 40. **Reaming swats**; foaming new ale.

[38] 41. **Souter**; shoemaker.

[Pg 245] [39] 68. **Maun**; must.

[40] 78. **The Deil**; the Devil.

[41] 81. **Skelpit**; hurried.

[42] 81. **Dub**; puddle.

[43] 86. **Bogles**; bogies or goblins.

[44] 88. **Houlets**; owls.

[45] 90. **Smoored**; smothered.

[46] 91. **Birks**; birches.

[47] 91. **Meikle stane**; huge stone.

[48] 93. **Whins**; furze bushes.

[49] 93. **Cairn**; pile of stones.

[50] 94. **Bairn**; child.

[51] 102. **Bleeze**; blaze.

[52] 103. **Bore**; hole.

[53] 105. **John Barleycorn**; a Scotch term for whiskey.

[54] 108. **Usquebae**; whiskey.

[55] 110. **Boddle**; farthing.

[56] 116. **Brent**; brought.

[57] 117. **Strathspeys.** The strathspey was a Scottish dance.

[58] 119. **Winnock-bunker**; window-seat.

[59] 121. **Towzie tyke**; shaggy dog.

[60] 123. **Gart them skirl**; made them shriek.

[61] 124. **Dirl**; ring.

[62] 127. **Cantrip slight**; magic charm.

[63] 134. **Gab**; throat.

[64] 147. **Cleekit**; took hold.

[65] 148. **Carlin**; witch.

[66] 149. **Coost her duddies**; threw off her clothes.

[67] 150. **Linket**; tripped.

[68] 150. **Sark**; shirt.

[69] 151. **Queans**; young women.

[70] 153. **Creeshie flannen**; greasy flannel.

[71] 154. **Seventeen-hunder linen**; fine linen. Technical weaving terms were familiar to the hand-loom workers of Burns's district.

[72] 157. **Hurdies**; hips.

[73] 158. **Burdies**; maidens.

[74] 159. **Beldams**; hags.

[Pg 246]

[75] 160. **Rigwoodie**; ancient.

[76] 160. **Spean**; wean.

[77] 161. **Crummock**; a short staff.

[78] 163. **Brawlie**; perfectly.

[79] 164. **Walie**; large.

[80] 165. **Core**; corps.

[81] 169. **Bear**; barley.

[82] 171. **Cutty-sark**; short shirt.

[83] 171. **Paisley harn**; a coarse cloth, made in Paisley, a Scotch town famous for its cloth-making industry.

[84] 174. **Vauntie**; proud.

[85] 176. **Coft**; bought.

[86] 181. **Lap and flang**; leapt and capered.

[87] 184. **E'en**; eyes.

[88] 185. **Fidged fu' fain**; fidgeted with eagerness.

[89] 186. **Hotched**; jerked his arm while playing the bagpipe.

[90] 187. **Syne**; then.

[91] 188. **Tint**; lost.

[92] 193. **Fyke**; fret.

[93] 194. **Byke**; hive.

[94] 200. **Eldritch**; unearthly.

[95] 201. **Fairin'**; reward.

[96] 208. According to an old superstition, witches are unable to pursue their victims over running water. Compare the story of the Headless Horseman in Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

[97] 213. **Ettle**; aim.

WALTER SCOTT

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1771, of an old Border family. Up to the age of four he was rather feeble, an attack of fever having left him with a shrunken right leg. This

disability, though it did not prevent his becoming a strong, sturdy man, still gave him ample
[Pg 247] leisure for wide reading while he was young. In high school and at the University of Edinburgh he was not known as a scholar, though he was popular with his companions, especially as a storyteller. In obedience to his father's wishes he took up law and toiled unenthusiastically at this profession for some years. Some trips of his into the Scotch Highlands led him to make a collection of old ballads, published in *Border Minstrelsy* (1802). From this time on he devoted himself exclusively to literature. His first important original poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, came out in 1805, followed by *Marmion* (1808), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811), and others of less merit. He had about this time become a silent partner in the printing firm of Ballantyne Brothers, contributing largely to the capital. In 1812 he purchased a farm on the river Tweed and built the famous house Abbotsford. The estate was an unprofitable investment, as it led him into extravagances apparently justified by an increasing income but really based on a false optimism.

In 1814 Scott wrote *Waverley*, the first of the long series of novels which made him distinguished as a prose-writer. From this time on his major work was in prose. He recognized without envy that Byron was beating him on his own ground in poetry, and accordingly changed to a field where success was surer. He was apparently prospering financially when, in 1827, the firm of which he was a member went into bankruptcy, largely because of poor business management, and he was left shouldered with a debt of about $600,000. Undaunted he set to work at the age of fifty-five to satisfy his creditors, and book after book poured from his pen until in four years he had paid off $270,000. The effort, however, was too much for his health; he broke down, and, after a short visit to Italy, died at Abbotsford in 1832.

[Pg 248] Scott's character was almost wholly admirable. He was manly, courageous, faithful, and generous. Always popular, he was a lavish entertainer in his prosperous days. He did his work cheerfully and bore up without complaint against misfortune and suffering such as few men are called upon to endure.

As a poet he was fluent, vigorous, and spirited, but usually paid little attention to form and polish. He made no effort to become a careful writer; but this is sometimes compensated for by a certain robustness which most of his verses possess. His poetical genius is best shown in narrative, where the movement is rapid and the action full of exciting moments. If his poems lack intense passion and deep meditation, they are at least picturesque and interesting.

J. G. Lockhart, Scott's son-in-law, is the author of the most complete biography. A good shorter life is that by R. H. Hutton in the English Men of Letters Series.

LOCHINVAR (Page 19)

Published first in *Marmion* (1808) as "Lady Heron's Song."

[98] 2. **Border**; the country on the border between England and Scotland, a region of warfare and strife for many centuries.

[99] 8. The **Esk** River is in southwest Scotland, and flows into Solway Firth.

[100] 32. **Galliard**; a lively dance of the period.

[101] 41. **Scaur**; a steep bank of rock.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

William Wordsworth was born in 1770 at Cockermouth on the borders of the beautiful English lake country. During a boyhood spent largely out of doors, rowing, walking, and skating, he
[Pg 249] imbibed a love for nature which had a broader manifestation in his later life and poetry. After a short period at Hawkshead School, he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took a degree in 1791. He then resided for a time in France; but was driven from there in 1793 by the Reign of Terror, and passed a few years in a rather idle way in the vicinity of London. His real poetic awakening came in 1797, when he and Coleridge lived near each other at Alfoxden among the Quantock Hills in Somerset. Here, in 1798, the two young men published *Lyrical Ballads*, a collection of poems written for the most part by Wordsworth, though Coleridge contributed *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and a few others. This book, especially in its treatment of nature, was a reaction against the stilted formalism which had characterized much of the English poetry of the eighteenth century, and as such it was the real stimulus for the revival of Romanticism which followed its appearance. After a year in Germany with his sister Dorothy, Wordsworth returned to the lake region now associated with his name, living at Grasmere until 1813, and after that at Rydal Mount. He married his cousin, Mary Hutchinson, in 1802. Among his later important works were *The Prelude* (1805), *The Excursion* (1814), and many shorter poems and sonnets. He was made poet-laureate in 1843, and died seven years after in 1850.

Wordsworth, though a radical in his youth, became more conservative in later years. He was a man of quiet tastes, and deliberately chose to live where he could be among simple people. As a poet, he was first of all an interpreter of nature, endowed with extraordinary keenness of observation and delighting in all her phases. In humanity, too, he had a sympathetic interest, especially in the everyday emotions and occupations of the plain men and women around him. And influencing his attitude toward both nature and humanity was a sort of religious mysticism
[Pg 250] which conceived the spirit of God as permeating all things, flowers and trees as well as the human heart.

Michael (Page 21)

Written in 1800 and published in the same year. Wordsworth's own note on the poem is as follows: "Written at Town-end, Grasmere, about the same time as 'The Brothers.' The Sheepfold, on which so much of the poem turns, remains, or rather the ruins of it. The character and circumstances of Luke were taken from a family to whom had belonged, many years before, the house we lived in at Town-end, along with some fields and woodlands on the eastern shore of Grasmere. The name of the Evening Star was not in fact given to this house, but to another on the same side of the valley, more to the north."

[102] 2. **Greenhead Ghyll**; a ravine near Grasmere.

[103] 134. **Easedale**; a small lake near Grasmere.

Lucy Gray; or, Solitude (Page 36)

Written in 1799 and published first in 1800. Wordsworth says of it: "Written at Goslar in Germany. It was founded on a circumstance told me by my Sister, of a little girl, who, not far from Halifax, in Yorkshire, was bewildered in a snowstorm. Her footsteps were traced by her parents to the middle of the lock of a canal, and no other vestige of her, backward or forward, could be traced. The body, however, was found in the canal."

THOMAS CAMPBELL

[Pg 251] Thomas Campbell was born at Glasgow, Scotland, July 27, 1777. He was educated at the University of Glasgow, where he made somewhat of a reputation as a versifier and translator. After some desultory attempts at tutoring, he published in 1799, *The Pleasures of Hope*, a long didactic poem which brought him real fame and a considerable financial reward. Soon after he travelled on the continent, where many of his war ballads were written. In his later days he was a figure in literary circles and was given a pension by the crown. He died in 1844 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Much of Campbell's longer poetic work is dull and unequal. However, in his own field of the vigorous patriotic ballad, he is without a rival. Saintsbury says of him, "He holds the place of best singer of war in a race and language which are those of the best singers, and not the worst fighters, in the history of the world."

Hohenlinden (Page 39)

Written in 1800, after the author had visited the battlefield.

In the battle of Hohenlinden (December 3, 1800), the French under General Moreau defeated the Austrians and compelled the Austrian Emperor to sue for peace. The treaty of Luneville, which followed, extended French territory to the Rhine.

[104] 4. The **Iser** is a river rising in northern Switzerland and flowing into the Danube.

Battle of the Baltic (Page 40)

Written in 1809.

The battle of the Baltic took place in the Baltic Sea before Copenhagen, April 2, 1801, between the English and the Danish fleets. England had accepted a declaration of the Armed Neutrality League (Russia, Denmark, and Sweden) as being really in the interests of her enemy, France, and the English fleet under Lord Parker was sent to the Baltic. Under Lord Nelson, the second in [Pg 252] command, a decisive victory was gained, largely through the fact that Nelson refused to obey the orders of his superior officer.

[105] 67. **Riou** was one of Nelson's officers.

CHARLES WOLFE

Charles Wolfe was born at Dublin, Ireland, in 1791 and died at Queenstown in 1823. He graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1814 and became curate of Donoughmore, Ireland. His *Remains*, with a brief memoir, were published in 1825.

His only poem of any distinction is the one here printed, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*.

The Burial of Sir John Moore at Corunna (Page 43)

First published in the *Newry Telegraph*, an Irish paper, in 1817, under the initials C. W.

Sir John Moore (1761-1809) was commander of an English army of twenty-four thousand men in Spain against a French force of eighty thousand under Soult. At the battle of Corunna, January 16, 1809, the English army won a doubtful victory in which their leader was killed. After burying him at dead of night, the English troops embarked for their own country.

[106] **Corunna** is a city in northwest Spain.

BYRON

George Gordon, Lord Byron, was born in London, January 22, 1788, and died at Missolonghi, April 19, 1824, at the age of thirty-six. Byron's father, a captain in the guards, after a romantic first marriage, wedded Catharine Gordon, a wealthy girl, of Aberdeenshire, whom, after
[Pg 253] squandering her fortune, he deserted shortly after young Byron's birth. Byron's mother was a quick-tempered, impulsive woman, ill-fitted to bring up a son who had a temperament almost exactly like her own. Once when a companion said to Byron, "Your mother's a fool," the boy answered, "I know it."

As a boy at school Byron formed passionate attachments, entered into the games he played with an unusual fierceness of spirit, and exhibited that sensitive pride which was the cause of much of his posing there and in later life. He was club-footed, a deformity about which he was extremely sensitive. Before entering Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1805, he had attended Harrow for five years. At Cambridge he remained less than three years, but in that time made some close friends and took an active part in all sorts of sports, especially riding and swimming. His vacations he spent at London or Southwell, generally quarrelling violently with his mother.

His first published poetry was *Hours of Idleness*, which appeared in 1807, and which was attacked by the *Edinburgh Review* so strenuously that Byron replied in 1809 with *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. In the same year he took his seat in the House of Lords, but he had no interest in politics, and, accordingly, left England for two years' travel on the continent. This tour was the occasion of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*. This poem was received so warmly that Byron remarked that "he awoke one morning to find himself famous." From now till the separation from his wife in 1816, after a year of wedded life, he was the lion of British society, but society took sides on this family difference, and as most of them sympathized with Lady Byron, Byron himself left England. He spent some time on Lake Geneva, where the Castle of Chillon is situated. He then went to Italy, where, amid his usual life of dissipation, he became
[Pg 254] interested in the Italian Insurrection. Among his friends and companions in Italy were Shelley and Leigh Hunt. In 1823, becoming attracted by the attempts of the Greeks to overthrow Turkish rule, he went to Greece as a leader, but he contracted a fever at Missolonghi, where he died, April 19, 1824.

As a poet Byron appeals especially to youth. His tales are so interesting that Scott made the remark that Byron beat him at his own game. Rapidity and force of movement, intensity and passion, excellent description, and a great, though not fine, command of poetic sound are the chief characteristics of his poetry. The romantic tale, *Childe Harold*, and the satire, *Don Juan*, are perhaps his best-known works.

The Prisoner of Chillon (Page 45)

The castle of Chillon is situated near Montreux at the opposite end of Lake Geneva from the city of Geneva. It is a large castle, built on an isolated rock twenty-two yards from the shore of the lake. Beneath this castle, but some nine or ten feet above the surface of the lake, supported by seven detached pillars and one semi-detached, is a vaulted chamber, which was formerly used as a prison. Here, from 1530 to 1536, was imprisoned Francis Bonnivard.

Bonnivard, the son of the Lord of Lune, was born in 1496. When sixteen years old, he inherited from his uncle the priory of St. Victor, near Geneva. Later he allied himself with this city against the Duke of Savoy, but was captured and imprisoned for two years in Grolée. In 1530 he again fell into the hands of the Duke of Savoy, who this time confined him for six years in Chillon castle. At the end of this period he was liberated by the Bernese and Genevese and returned to Geneva to live a brilliant but wild life until 1570.

[Pg 255] Byron takes no pains to stick to the facts of Bonnivard's imprisonment or life, or even to the facts about the prison itself. Notice, however, that he calls the poem "A Fable."

Byron and Shelley made a visit to Chillon in June, 1816, and while delayed for two days at Ouchy, a village on Lake Geneva, Byron wrote this poem.

Byron and Shelley belonged to a group of poets who were influenced by the French Revolution. Byron's love of freedom was so great that he aided Italy, and finally died from a fever contracted at Missolonghi, where he had gone to aid the Greek revolutionists. The following sonnet, which was prefixed to *The Prisoner of Chillon*, gives an idea of Byron's love of liberty.

Sonnet of Chillon

"Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

"Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard!—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God."

[107] 4. **Sudden fears.** Marie Antoinette's hair has been said to have turned gray on the return from Varennes to Paris. It certainly turned gray very quickly during the anxiety of the Revolution.

[108] 22. **Sealed.** How?

[109] 27.Chillon has seven Gothic-looking pillars, i.e. a pillar that holds up Gothic-style arches. [Note missing in original text.]

[110] 35. **Marsh's meteor lamp**; will o' the wisp.

[Pg 256] [111] 38. **Cankering thing.** What does canker do?

[112] 57. The **elements** are fire, air, earth, and water.

[113] 82. **Polar day.** What is the length of the day near the poles?

[114] 100. **Sooth**; truth.

[115] 107. **Lake Leman**; another name for Lake Geneva.

[116] 133. The **moat** was the ditch which surrounded a castle. The moat of Chillon Castle, however, was the part of the lake which separated the rock from the shore.

[117] 179. **Rushing forth in blood.** Byron is said to have been fond of the symptoms of violent death. He, a year after writing this poem, saw three robbers guillotined, taking careful notice of his own and their actions. Goethe, the German poet, even thought that Byron must have committed murder, he seemed so interested in sudden death.

[118] 230. **Selfish death**; suicide.

[119] 237. **Wist**; the imperfect tense of *wit*, *to be aware of*, *to know*.

[120] 288. **Brother's.** It was a Mohammedan belief that the souls of the blessed inhabited green birds in paradise.

[121] 294. **Solitary cloud.** This line is one of several very close similarities in this poem to Wordsworth; cf.:—

"I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills."

[122] 341. The **little isle** referred to is Ile de Peilz, an islet on which a century ago were planted three elms.

[123] 392. **With a sigh.** It is not unheard of for men long imprisoned to lose all desire for freedom, and even to return to their place of confinement after being set free.

MAZEPPA (Page 58)

The following extract from Voltaire's *History of Charles XII* was prefixed to the first edition of *Mazeppa* as the "Advertisement":—

[Pg 257] "The man who then filled this position [Hetman of Ukraine] was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, who had been born in the Palatinate of Podolia. He had been brought up as a page to John Casimir, at whose court he had taken on some of the color of learning. An intrigue which he had in his youth with the wife of a Polish gentleman having been discovered, the husband had him bound, all naked, upon a wild horse, and in this condition let go. The horse, which was from the country of Ukraine, returned and brought there Mazeppa, half-dead with weariness and hunger. Some peasants helped him: he remained a long time among them and distinguished himself in several expeditions against the Tartars. The superiority of his wisdom brought him great consideration among the Cossacks. His reputation increased day by day, until the Czar was obliged to make him Prince of Ukraine."

The real life of Mazeppa was as follows: Ivan Stepánovitch Mazeppa was born in 1645, of Cossack origin and of the lesser nobility of Volhynia. When fifteen years old, he became the page to John Casimir V of Poland, and, while holding this office, learned Latin and much about statesmanship. Later, however, being banished on account of a quarrel, he returned home to his mother in Volhynia. While here, to pass the time, he fell in love with the wife of a neighbor, Lord Falbouski. This lord, or pane, discovering his wife and her lover, caused Mazeppa to be stripped and bound to his own horse. The horse, enraged by lashes and pistol shots and then let loose, ran immediately to Mazeppa's own courtyard.

Mazeppa, later, after holding various secretaryships, was made hetman, or prince, over all of Ukraine, and for nearly twenty years he was the ally of Peter the Great. Afterwards, however, he offered his services to Stanislaus of Poland, and finally to Charles XII of Sweden. "Pultowa's Day,"
[Pg 258] July 8, 1709, when Charles was defeated by the Russians and put to flight, was the last of Mazeppa's power. He fled with Charles across the river Borysthenes and received protection from the Turks. He died a year later at Varnitza on the Dneister, just in time to escape being

delivered over to Peter.

[124] 1. **Pultowa.** See Introductory Note.

[125] 9. **Day were dark and drear**; Napoleon's famous defeat, and retreat from Moscow, October, 1815.

[126] 15. **Die.** What is the plural?

[127] 23. **Gieta** was a colonel in the king of Sweden's army.

[128] 51. **Levels man and brute.** Burke says in his *Speech on Conciliation with America*, "Public calamity is a mighty leveller."

[129] 56. **Hetman.**See Introductory Note. Mazeppa was sixty-four years old.

[130] 104. **Bucephalus**; the horse of Alexander the Great. Alexander, when a boy, was the first to tame this horse, thereby, in fulfilment of the oracle, proving his right to the throne.

[131] 105. **Scythia** was a country, north and northeast of the Black Sea, which was inhabited by nomadic people. It was noted for its horses.

[132] 116. **Borysthenes**; another name for the Dnieper River.

[133] 151. A **Mime** was a sort of farce, travestying real persons or events.

[134] 154. **Thyrsis** was one of the names commonly used for shepherds in the Greek and Latin pastoral poets, as Theocritus, Bion, Virgil. The names were conventionally used by modern imitators of these poets.

[135] 155. **Palatine** (from *palatium*, meaning palace) was a name given to a count, or ruler of a district, who had almost regal power.

[136] 237. **O'erwrought**; the past participle of *overwork*. Cf. *wheelwright*, *wainwright*, etc.

[Pg 259] [137] 329. **Cap-à-pie**; from head to foot.

[138] 349. **'Scutcheon**, or escutcheon, is the shield-shaped surface upon which the armorial bearings are charged.

[139] 437. **Spahi's**; the name of a Turkish corps of irregular cavalry.

[140] 575. **Uncouth**; literally, unknown.

[141] 618. **Ignis-fatuus**; will-o-the-wisp, Jack-o'-lantern.

[142] 664. **Werst**; a Russian measure equal to about two-thirds of a mile.

The Destruction of Sennacherib (Page 86)

Read *2 Chronicles*, chapter 32, and *Isaiah*, chapters 36 and 37.

JOHN KEATS

John Keats was born October, 1795, and died on the 23d of February, 1821. He was the son of a livery-stable keeper, who had married his former proprietor's daughter. The parents had wished to educate Keats and his two brothers, but before Keats was fifteen, both his father and mother had died. He was then apprenticed to a surgeon at Edmonton, under whom he remained four years, and then went up to London to complete his training for a medical degree. This he received in due time and began to practise, but he found literature so much more attractive that, in about a year, he gave up his attempt to practise medicine. At about this time he became acquainted with Leigh Hunt, who had a good deal of influence upon Keats's literary beginnings. His first volume of poetry, which appeared in 1817, shows this influence strongly. A year later his *Endymion* was published and was so severely criticised by *Blackwood's* and especially by the *Quarterly* that Keats took it much to heart; some have supposed that this attack very much [Pg 260] hastened his death. His brother George had moved to America in 1818, and his brother Tom was now dying with consumption. Keats nursed him faithfully until his death. Immediately after this sorrow, he fell deeply in love, but his health was so greatly impaired that he found it necessary, in 1820, to take a trip to Italy. He did not grow stronger, however, but died at Rome on the 23d of February, 1821.

Keats's poetry is noted especially for its sensuous beauty, its descriptions, and its remarkable reproduction of the Greek and romantic spirits.

The Eve of St. Agnes (Page 88)

Around St. Agnes' Eve, which is the night before the Feast of St. Agnes on January 21, and which corresponds to the Scotch "Hallowe'en," there grew up the superstition that a maiden could, by observing certain traditional precautions, have in her sleep a vision of her future husband. Perhaps the most common way to obtain this vision was for the girl to go to sleep on her back with her hands behind her head; then at midnight she would dream that her lover came and kissed her. This is the superstition that Keats has made use of in *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

St. Agnes was a Roman girl, who at thirteen was loved by the son of a Roman prefect, but, however, being like her parents a Christian and having vowed virginity, she told her lover that she was already betrothed. The youth, thinking he had some earthly rival, as a result fell so very

sick that his father tried to intercede with the girl's parents. When he found these people were Christians, he tried to compel Agnes to become a vestal virgin or marry his son. Agnes, because
[Pg 261] she refused to do either of these things, was dragged to the altar, but because here, by her prayers, she restored to her lover the sight which he had lost, she was set free by the Prefect. The people, however, tried to burn her, but were themselves consumed in the fire, until finally one of their number slew her with his sword. A few days after her death, her parents had a vision of her, surrounded by angels and accompanied by a lamb (Agnus Dei). After her canonization it was customary to sacrifice on St. Agnes' Day, during the singing, two lambs whose wool the next day was woven by the nuns into pallia for the archbishops. (Cf. I. 115, 117.) Cf. *Agnus* and *Agnes*.

[143] 5. **Beadsman. Bead** originally meant prayer; hence "to say one's beads." A beadsman was an inmate of an almshouse who was bound to pray for the founders of the house. In Shakespeare the word is used to denote one who prays for another.

[144] 31. **Snarling.** Does this verse resemble the sound described? What is the name of this figure?

[145] 40. **New-stuffed.** What does this mean here?

[146] 46. **St. Agnes' Eve.**See Introductory Note.

[147] 70. **Amort** (Fr. à la mort); lifeless, spiritless.

[148] 71. **Lambs.**See Introductory Note.

[149] 75. **Porphyro** (Gr. *porphyro* = a purple fish, purple). Why did Keats choose this name instead of Lionel, as he first intended?

[150] 77. **Buttress'd** means supported, but here it must mean protected from; *i.e.* Porphyro was in the shadow of the buttress.

[151] 81. **Sooth**; truth. Cf. *soothsayer*.

[152] 86. **Hyena.** Find out the characteristics of this animal, and see what the force of the epithet is here.

[153] 90. **Beldame** (*bel + dame*) originally meant a fair lady, then grandmother and, in general, old woman or hag.

[Pg 262] [154] 105. **Gossip** originally meant a sponsor at baptism (*God-sib*), then a boon companion, and finally a tattler.

[155] 115. **Holy loom.** See Introductory Note.

[156] 120. **Witch's sieve.** This refers to the superstition that witches could hold water in sieves and could sail in them. Cf. *Macbeth*, I. 3. 1, 8:—

> "But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
> And, like a rat without a tail,
> I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do."

[157] 126. **Mickle**; much.

[158] 135. **Lap.**

> "Madeline is asleep in her bed; but she is also asleep in accordance with the legends of the season; and therefore the bed becomes their lap as well as sleep's."
>
> —Leigh Hunt.

[159] 138. How make **purple riot** in his heart?

[160] 171. **Merlin** was the sorcerer in Arthur's court. Vivien succeeded in getting from him a secret by which she shut him up in a hollow tree. See Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien*. Malory has another version of the story.

[161] 173. **Cates**; provisions,—especially rich, luxurious provisions. Cf. *cater*, *caterer*.

[162] 174. **Tambour frame.** Tambour is a kind of drum; cf. *tambourine*. A tambour frame is a round frame for holding material which is to be embroidered.

[163] 208. **Casement high....** On these next three stanzas Keats spent much time. They are considered beautiful description. Why?

[164] 214. **Heraldries** are coats of arms.

[165] 215. **Emblazonings**; colored heraldries.

[166] 218. **Gules**; the tincture red. In a shield without color gules is indicated by vertical parallel lines.

[Pg 263] [167] 241. **Missal**; a mass book for the year. What is the meaning of this line? **Paynims**; pagans.

[168] 257. **Morphean.** Morpheus was the god of sleep.

[169] 262. **Azure-lidded sleep.** Note the different senses appealed to in these next stanzas. Keats is called one of our most sensuous poets.

[170] 266. **Soother**; used here for *more soothing*.

[171] 267. What are **lucent syrops**? Note derivation.

[172] 277. **Eremite**; hermit.

[173] 292. Keats wrote a poem about this time called *La Belle Dame sans Merci*.

[174] 346. **Wassailers** was a term originally used for men drinking each other's health with the words *wes h[=a]l*, be whole.

[175] 375. **Angela**. Have the deaths of Angela and the Beadsman been foretold?

ALFRED TENNYSON

Alfred Tennyson was born in Somersby, Lincolnshire, England, on August 6, 1809, and died at Aldworth in Surrey in 1892. He was the third of twelve brothers and sisters, several of whom later showed evidences of genius. As early as 1827 he and his brother Charles published *Poems by Two Brothers*, for which they received ten pounds. At Trinity College, Cambridge, which he entered in 1828, he won the chancellor's gold medal for a prize poem *Timbuctoo*. On the death of his father in 1831 he left Cambridge without a degree. Before this in 1830 he had published *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, and two years later in 1832 a new volume appeared which was severely criticised, though it contained much excellent work. The death of his close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, in 1833 was a terrible blow to Tennyson and one from which it took him many years to
[Pg 264] recover. It was, however, the inspiration for his elegy *In Memoriam*, written for the most part during the period when the loss was felt most keenly. For some time after, Tennyson lived quietly, gaining in power and expression, and busy training himself for the future. The product of this seclusion came in two volumes of poetry, printed in 1842, which were enthusiastically greeted. In 1845 Wordsworth wrote, "Tennyson is decidedly the first of our living poets." *The Princess; A Medley*, appeared in 1847, and three years later he gave to the world the completed *In Memoriam*. This same year (1850) is also notable for his marriage with Miss Emily Sellwood and his appointment as poet-laureate in place of Wordsworth, who had just died.

From this time on his place in literature was secured, and he lived a happy life, making occasional short trips in England and on the continent, but remaining for the most part quietly at his estate on the Isle of Wight. Among his later works are *Maud* (1855), *Enoch Arden* (1864), *Idylls of the King* (finished 1872), a group of *Ballads, and Other Poems* (1880), and several dramas. He accepted a peerage in 1883. Nine years later he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Tennyson, in the range and scope of his work, in the variety of his interests, and in the versatility of his art, is the most representative poet of the nineteenth century. He tried many kinds of poetry and met with some success in all. He learned versification as Stevenson did his prose style, by long-continued study and practice, with the result that he became eventually a supreme literary artist, a master of melody in words. His diction is admirably precise and exact, and he is easy to read and understand. While he is rarely profound or searching, like Browning, neither is he overintellectual; but he embeds sane and safe thought in a mould of beauty. He was a national poet in his patriotism and fondness for English scenery. Finally he was an apostle of religious optimism, ready to combat the morbid beliefs which were disturbing contemporary philosophy.

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DORA (Page 103)

Published in 1842.

The clearness and simplicity of this exquisite pastoral make any explanatory notes superfluous. Regarding it, Wordsworth once said to Tennyson, "I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your Dora and have not yet succeeded."

ŒNONE (Page 108)

Most of this poem was written in 1830 while Tennyson was travelling in the Pyrenees Mountains with his friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. The descriptions of scenery belong, therefore, to that district, and not to the vicinity of ancient Troy. *Œnone* was first published in 1832, but was afterward frequently revised; it appears here in the final form approved by Tennyson himself.

[176] 1. **Ida** is a mountain in northwest Asia Minor near the site of Troy.

[177] 2. **Ionian**; Grecian.

[178] 10. Gargarus is the highest peak of Mount Ida.

[179] 13. **Troas** is the district in northwest Asia Minor in which was located the city of Troy.

[180] 13. **Ilion** was the Greek name for Troy.

[181] 16. **Paris** was the son of Priam, king of Troy, and his wife Hecuba.

[182] 37. **River-God**; Cebren, the god of a small river near Troas.

[183] 40. **Rose slowly.** According to tradition, Neptune, the god of the sea, was the founder of Troy, but was assisted by Apollo, who raised the walls to the music of his lyre.

[184] 51. **Simois**; a river having its source in Mount Ida.

[185] 65. **Hesperian gold.** The apples of Hesperides were made of pure gold. They were given to Herè as a wedding present, and thereafter guarded night and day by a dragon. Hercules finally secured three of them through a stratagem.

[Pg 266] [186] 66. **Ambrosially.** Ambrosia was the food of the gods.

[187] 72. **Oread.** The Oreads were nymphs who were supposed to guide travellers through dangerous places on the mountains.

[188] 79. **Peleus**; a king of Phitia who married Thetis, a sea-nymph. To the wedding feast all the immortals were invited except Eris, goddess of discord. In revenge, she cast a golden apple on the banquet table before the gods and goddesses, with an inscription awarding it to the most beautiful among them. The strife which followed resulted in the choosing of Paris as judge in the matter.

[189] 81. **Iris** was the messenger and attendant of Juno. She frequently appeared in the form of a rainbow.

[190] 83. **Herè** (Roman Juno) was the wife and sister of Zeus (Roman Jupiter), and therefore Queen of Heaven.

[191] 84. **Pallas** (Roman Minerva) was the goddess of wisdom.

[192] 84. **Aphroditè** (Roman Venus) was the goddess of beauty and love.

[193] 95. **Amaracus**; a fragrant flower.

[194] 95. **Asphodel**; supposed to have been a variety of Narcissus.

[195] 102. The **peacock** was a bird sacred to Herè.

[196] 151. **Guerdon**; reward.

[197] 170. **Idalian**; so-called from Idalium, a town in Cyprus sacred to Aphroditè.

[198] 171. **Paphian**; a reference to Paphos in Cyprus where Aphroditè first set foot after her birth from sea foam.

[199] 195. **Pard**; leopard.

[200] 220. **The Abominable**; Eris, the goddess already referred to.

[201] 257. **The Greek woman**; Helen, wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. She was the wife promised to Paris by Aphroditè as his reward for his decision. Paris stole her from her husband through the direction of Aphroditè, and carried her back to Troy. As a result of this act, the Greeks, under Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon, joined in an attack on Troy which ended, after ten years, in the capture of that city. In the course of the siege Paris was killed.

[Pg 267] [202] 259. **Cassandra**; the daughter of Priam, and hence the sister of Paris. She was condemned by Apollo to utter prophesies which, though true, would never be believed.

The conclusion of the story of Œnone and Paris may be read in Tennyson's own *Death of Œnone* or in William Morris's *Death of Paris*.

Enoch Arden (Page 117)

This poem was written in 1862, its actual composition taking only two weeks, although the poet had been considering the theme for some time. It was first printed in 1864 and became popular at once, sixty thousand copies being sold in a very short period.

[203] 7. **Danish barrows** are burial mounds supposed to have been left by the early Danish invaders of England.

[204] 18. The **fluke** is the part of the anchor which fastens in the ground.

[205] 36. **Wife to both.** This line is a prophecy of future events in the story.

[206] 94. **Osier.** The reference is to baskets made of osier, a kind of willow.

[207] 98. The **lion-whelp** was evidently a heraldic device over the gateway to the hall.

[208] 99. **Peacock-yewtree**; a yewtree cut, after the fashion of the old landscape gardeners, into the shape of a peacock.

[209] 213. **Look on yours.** This is another prophetic line.

[210] 326. **Garth**; a yard or garden.

[211] 337. **Conies**; rabbits.

[212] 370. **Just ... begun**; notice here the repetition of line 67: each of the two lines introduces a crisis in the life of Philip. Several other such repetitions may be found in the poem.

[Pg 268] [213] 494. **Under the palm-tree**; found in *Judges* iv. 5.

[214] 525. The **Bay of Biscay** is off the west coast of France and north of Spain.

[215] 527. **Summer of the world**; the equator.

[216] 563. **Stem**; the trunk of a tree.

[217] 573. **Convolvuluses**; plants with twining stems.

[218] 575. **The broad belt of the world.** The ancients considered the ocean to be a body of water completely surrounding the land.

[219] 633. This description may be compared with that of Ben Gunn in Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

[220] 671. A **holt** is a piece of woodland.

[221] 671. A **tilth** is a name for land which is tilled.

[222] 728. **Latest**; last.

[223] 733. **Shingle**; coarse gravel or small stones.

[224] 747. **Creasy**; full of creases.

The Revenge (Page 146)

Published first in the *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1878. Reprinted in *Ballads, and other Poems*, 1880.

The Revenge deals with an incident of the war between England and Spain during the latter half of the sixteenth century. Sir Richard Grenville, the hero, came from a long line of fighters and was one of the most famous naval commanders of the period. He had led, in 1585, the first English colony to Virginia, and had been in charge of the Devon coast defence at the time of the *Armada* (1588) when that great Spanish fleet, organized to deal a crushing blow to England, was defeated and almost entirely destroyed by English ships and seamen under Lord Howard and Sir
[Pg 269] Francis Drake. In 1591 he was given command of the *Revenge*, a second-rate ship of five hundred tons' burden and carrying a crew of two hundred and fifty men, and sent to the Azores to intercept a Spanish treasure fleet. While there, he was cut off from his own squadron and left with two alternatives: to turn his back on the enemy, or to sail through the fifty-three Spanish vessels opposed to him. He refused to retreat, and the terrible battle described in the ballad was the result.

Grenville was a somewhat haughty and tyrannical leader, though noble-minded, loyal, and patriotic. In Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* which gives a vivid portrayal of English national feeling and character during these stirring times, he is made to take an important part, and is idealized as "a truly heroic personage—a steadfast, God-fearing, chivalrous man, conscious (as far as a soul so healthy could be conscious) of the pride of beauty, and strength, and valour, and wisdom." Froude calls him "a goodly and gallant gentleman." Perhaps the best comment on him is found in his own dying words: "Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind: for that I have ended my life as true soldier ought to do, that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion, and honour. Whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier; that hath done his dutie as he was bound to do."

The Revenge is styled by Stevenson (the *English Admirals*) "one of the noblest ballads in the English language." Indeed, in vigor of spirit, and in patriotic feeling, there are few poems which surpass it.

[225] 1. The **Azores** (here pronounced *A-zo-res*) are a group of islands in the North Atlantic Ocean. The island of *Flores* (pronounced *Flo-res*) is the most westerly of the group.

[226] 4. **Lord Thomas Howard** was admiral of the fleet to which the *Revenge* belonged.

[Pg 270] [227] 12. **The Inquisition** was a system of tribunalsformed in the thirteenth century by the Roman Catholic Church to investigate and punish cases of religious unbelief. In the sixteenth century the Inquisition became infamous in Spain because of the cruelty of its persecutions, many people suffering terrible tortures and dying the most painful deaths, through its instrumentality.

[228] 17. **Bideford** in Devon was the birthplace of Sir Richard Grenville. In the sixteenth century it was one of England's chief seaports and sent seven vessels to fight the Armada. It is described in the opening chapter of *Westward Ho!*

[229] 21. The **thumbscrew** was an instrument of torture employed by the Inquisition.

[230] 21. Victims of the Inquisition were sometimes tied to a **stake** and burned alive.

[231] 30. **Seville** is a city in southwestern Spain. It is here to be pronounced with the accent on the first syllable.

[232] 31. **Don**; a Spanish title of rank, here used to designate any Spaniard.

[233] 46. **Galleon**; a name applied to sailing vessels of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

ROBERT BROWNING

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, May 7, 1812, and died at Venice, December 12, 1889. Browning's father, as his grandfather had been, was employed in the Bank of England. Mr. Browning, who was an indulgent father, decided that his son's education should be under private tutors. This lack of being educated with other boys is sometimes supposed to have been one of the causes why Browning found difficulty in expressing his thoughts clearly to other people. It was at first planned that Browning should become a lawyer, but as he had no taste for this, his
[Pg 271] father agreed to allow his son to adopt literature as a profession. When Browning had made his choice, he read Johnson's Dictionary for preparation. *Pauline*, his first published poem, attracted almost no attention, but Browning kept on writing, regardless of inattention. The actor, Macready, with whom he became friendly, turned Browning's attention to the writing of plays, but he was never successful as a writer for the stage. On his return from his second visit to Italy, in 1844, he read Miss Elizabeth Barrett's *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* and expressed so much appreciation of this poem that, on the suggestion of a common friend, he wrote to tell Miss Barrett how much he liked her work. This was the beginning of one of the famous literary love affairs of the world. Although Miss Barrett was several years older than Browning and a great invalid, they were married, against family opposition, in 1846, and went immediately to Italy. Mrs. Browning's health was now much improved, and she lived till 1861. On her death, Browning, greatly overcome, returned to England. Gradually he went more and more into society, and as his

popularity as a poet increased, he became a well-known figure in public. He continued writing throughout his life. He died at his son's house in Venice in 1889.

How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix (Page 154)

Browning wrote concerning this poem: "There is no sort of historical foundation about *Good News from Ghent*. I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York' then in my stable at home. It was written in pencil on the fly-leaf of Bartoli's *Simboli*, I [Pg 272] remember." Such an incident might, of course, have happened at the "Pacification of Ghent," a treaty of union between Holland, Zealand, and southern Netherlands under William of Orange, against Philip II of Spain. The distance between Ghent and Aix as mapped out in this poem is something more than ninety miles. Do you think a horse could gallop that distance? Notice that the verse gives the effect of galloping.

[234] 10. **Pique**; seems to be the pommel.

[235] 14 ff. **Lokeren**, **Boom**, **Düffeld**, **Mecheln**, **Aerschot**, **Hasselt**, **Looz**, **Tongres**, **Dalhem**; towns varying from seven to twenty-five miles apart on the route taken from Ghent to Aix.

[236] See Note 235 above.

[237] See Note 235 above.

[238] See Note 235 above.

[239] See Note 235 above.

[240] See Note 235 above.

[241] See Note 235 above.

[242] See Note 235 above.

[243] See Note 235 above.

[244] 46. **Save Aix.** Notice that this is the first we know of the purpose of this ride. Is this an advantage or a disadvantage?

Incident of the French Camp (Page 156)

Ratisbon (German Regensburg), which has been besieged seventeen times since the eighteenth century, was stormed by Napoleon, May, 1809, during his Austrian campaign. Mrs. Sutherland Orr, the biographer of Browning, says this incident actually happened, except that the hero was a man and not a boy.

[245] 5. **Neck out-thrust.** Notice how Browning gives the well-known attitude of Napoleon.

[246] 9. **Mused.** What effect has this supposed soliloquy of Napoleon?

[247] 11. **Lannes**; a general of Napoleon's, and the Duke of Montebello.

[248] 29. **Flag-bird.** What bird was on Napoleon's flag?

The Pied Piper of Hamelin (Page 158)

There are many versions of this story which Browning might have used. He is said to have [Pg 273] used directly the account in *The Wonders of the Little World; or a General History of Man*, written by Nathaniel Wanley and published in 1678. This poem, however, from whatever source the story was taken, was deservedly popular long before Browning himself was. It was written to amuse, during a sickness, the son of William Macready, the most prominent English actor of his time and a close friend of Browning's.

[249] 1. **Hamelin**; a town near Hanover, the capital of the province of Brunswick, Prussia.

[250] 37. **Guilder**; a Dutch coin worth about forty cents.

[251] 68. **Trump of Doom.** The Archangel Gabriel was to blow his trumpet to summon the dead on the Day of Judgment.

[252] 79. **Pied Piper.** *Pied* means variegated like a magpie. Cf. *piebald*.

[253] 89. **Cham.** The Great Cham, or Khan, was the ruler of Tartary. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, gives an account of him. Dr. Johnson was called the Great Cham of literature.

[254] 91. **Nizam**; a native ruler of Hyderabad, India.

[255] 123, 126. **Julius Cæsar and his Commentary.** Julius Cæsar, the great Roman general and dictator, who wrote his *Commentaries* on his wars in Gaul and Britain.

[256] 169. **Poke**; pocket.

[257] 182. **Stiver**; a small Dutch coin.

[258] 188. **Piebald.** Cf. *pied*, line 79.

[259] 260. **Needle's eye.** Cf. *Matthew* xix. 24; *Mark* x. 25; *Luke* xviii. 25.

Hervé Riel (Page 168)

[260] 1. **Hogue.** Cape La Hogue, on the east side of the same peninsula as Cape La Hague,

was the scene, in 1692, of the defeat of the French by the united English and Dutch fleets.

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[261] 5. **Saint Malo on the Rance**; a town on a small island near the shore of France. The entrance to its fine harbor is very narrow and filled with rocks. At high tide there is forty-five to fifty feet of water, but at low tide this channel is dry.

[262] 30. **Plymouth Sound.** Plymouth is on the southwestern coast of England.

[263] 43. **Pressed**; forced into military or naval service.

[264] 43. **Tourville**; the famous French admiral, who commanded at La Hogue.

[265] 44. **Croisickese**; La Croisic, a small fishing village near the mouth of the Loire, which Browning often visited.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born in London, of Italian parentage, in 1828. He was educated at King's College School, but became very early a student of painting, in which art he attained considerable prominence. He was a member of the famous pre-Raphaelite group of artists and authors, and was largely responsible for the movement started by them. In 1861 he published *The Early Italian Poets*, a volume of translations; in 1870, *Poems*; and in 1881, *Ballads and Sonnets*. His last days were unhappy, his death in 1882 being hastened by overindulgence in narcotics.

Rossetti's painting had a marked effect upon his poetry, chiefly in giving him the faculty of vivid and ornate description. Though essentially a lyric poet, he revived old English ballad forms with much success, and his narrative poems are vigorous and spirited. A good short life of Rossetti is that by Joseph Knight in the Great Writers Series.

The White Ship (Page 175)

First published in 1881 in the volume called *Ballads and Sonnets*.

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Henry the First, the third son of William the Conqueror had, on the death of his brother William the Second (William Rufus) in 1100, seized the crown of England by force from his other elder brother, Robert, Duke of Normandy. In 1106, after overthrowing Robert at Tenchebray, he became also Duke of Normandy, thus uniting under himself the two nations. This bond of union he further strengthened by marrying Mathilda, an English princess. His reign, which lasted until 1135, marked a revival in English national feeling, and a long step was taken toward the assimilation of the victorious Normans by the people whom they had conquered.

Henry and Mathilda had only one son, William, who was born in 1103. The following account of his death is given by William of Malmesbury (edited by J. C. Giles): "Giving orders for returning to England, the king set sail from Barfleur just before twilight on the seventh before the kalends of December; and the breeze which filled his sails conducted him safely to his kingdom and extensive fortunes. But the young prince, who was now somewhat more than seventeen years of age, and, by his father's indulgence, possessed everything but the name of king, commanded another vessel to be prepared for himself; almost all the young nobility flocking around him, from similarity of youthful pursuits. The sailors, too, immoderately filled with wine, with that seaman's hilarity which their cups excited, exclaimed, that those who were now ahead must soon be left astern; for the ship was of the best construction and recently fitted with new materials. When, therefore, it was now dark night, these imprudent youths, overwhelmed with liquor, launched the vessel from the shore.... The carelessness of the intoxicated crew drove her on a rock which rose above the waves not far from shore.... The oars, dashing, horribly crashed against the rock, and

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her battered prow hung immovably fixed. Now, too, the water washed some of the crew overboard, and, entering the chinks, drowned others; when the boat having been launched, the young prince was received into it, and might certainly have been saved by reaching the shore, had not his illegitimate sister, the Countess of Perche, now struggling with death in the larger vessel, implored her brother's assistance. Touched with pity, he ordered the boat to return to the ship, that he might rescue his sister; and thus the unhappy youth met his death through excess of affection; for the skiff, overcharged by the multitudes who leaped into her, sank, and buried all indiscriminately in the deep. One rustic alone escaped; who, floating all night upon the mast, related in the morning the dismal catastrophe of the tragedy."

[266] Henry never recovered from the shock of this disaster; and although he married again, he left at his death no direct male heir to the throne.

[267] 2. **Rouen**; a city in northwest France on the river Seine.

[268] 14. **Clerkly Henry.** In his youth Henry had been a student and scholar—hence his early nickname "Henry Beauclerc."

[269] 15. **Ruthless**; pitiless.

[270] 17. **Eyes were gone.** According to a legend, which, however, has no historical foundation, Henry had put out the eyes of his brother Robert.

[271] 26. **Fealty.** Under the feudal system each vassal or dependant was required to take an oath of allegiance to his overlord.

[272] 35. **Liege**; having the right to allegiance.

[273] 36. **Father's foot.** William the Conqueror, Henry's father, defeated Harold, the English king, at Hastings in 1066 and thus became master of England.

[274] 39. **Rood**; the fourth part of an acre.

[275] 45. **Harfleur's harbor.** Harfleur is a seaport town on the north bank of the outlet of the river Seine in northwest France.

[Pg 277]

[276] 59. **Hind**; servant.

[277] 98. **Moil**; wet.

[278] 138. **Maugre**; notwithstanding.

[279] 163. **Honfleur**; a town on the south bank of the outlet of the river Seine, opposite Harfleur.

[280] 166. **Body of Christ**; the procession of the Holy Communion.

[281] 178. **Hight**; called.

[282] 198. **Foredone**; gone.

[283] 211. **Shrift**; the confession made to a priest.

[284] 214. **Winchester**; a cathedral city in southern England, the ancient capital of the country.

[285] 233. **Pleasaunce**; pleasure.

[286] 236. **Pardie**; certainly or surely. It was originally an oath from the French *par Dieu*.

[287] 260. **Dais**; the platform on which was the king's throne.

[288] 268. **Rede**; story.

WILLIAM MORRIS

William Morris was born in 1834 in Walthamstead, Essex, England, and died in London in 1896. He went to Exeter College, Oxford, in 1853, where he formed a close friendship with Edward Burne-Jones, the future artist. A little later he came under the influence of Rossetti, who induced him to attempt painting, an art which he followed with no great success. In 1858 he published *The Defence of Guinevere, and Other Poems*. This volume was followed by *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (finished 1872), and *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876). In 1863 he became a manufacturer of wall paper and artistic furniture, branching out afterwards into weaving, dyeing, and other crafts. After 1885 he was a confirmed Socialist, speaking
[Pg 278] frequently at laborers' meetings and pouring forth a steady stream of leaflets and pamphlets in support of his radical beliefs. His death was probably due to overwork.

Morris was by instinct a lover of the beautiful and harmonious. A fluent versifier, he delighted especially in the composition of narrative poetry, which he adorned with ornate description and superb decoration. This very richness sometimes cloys the taste and tends to arouse a feeling of monotony. His longest work, *The Earthly Paradise*, is modelled somewhat on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and contains twenty-four stories, twelve mediæval and twelve classic in origin.

A satisfactory short life is that by Alfred Noyes in the English Men of Letters Series.

ATALANTA'S RACE (Page 187)

Published in 1868 as the first story in the collection called *The Earthly Paradise*. The episode was a favorite with Greek and Latin writers, and has been used occasionally in modern times. The metre in this version is the antiquated Rime Royal.

[289] 1. **Arcadia** was a province of the Grecian peninsula.

[290] 14. **Cornel** is a kind of wood of great hardness used for making bows.

[291] 28. **King Schœnus**; a Bœotian king, the son of Athamas. Most other versions of the story name Iasius as Atalanta's father.

[292] 62. **Image of the sun**; a statue of Phœbus Apollo, the sun-god.

[293] 63. **The Fleet-foot One**; Mercury (Hermes), the messenger of the gods.

[294] 79. **Diana**; the daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and the sister of Apollo. She was the goddess of the moon and of the hunt. She was also the protector of chastity. See Guerber, *Myths of Greece and Rome*, Chapter VI.

[Pg 279]

[295] 80. **Lists**; desires.

[296] 177. **Saffron gown**; the orange-yellow dress indicative of the bride.

[297] 184. **The sea-born one**; Aphrodite (Venus).See page 266.

[298] 206. The **Dryads** were wood-nymphs who were supposed to watch over vegetation.

[299] 208. **Adonis' bane**; the wild boar. Adonis was a beautiful youth who was passionately loved by Venus, though he did not return her affection. He was mortally wounded at a hunt by a wild boar, and died in the arms of the goddess.

[300] 211. **Argive**; Grecian.

[301] 224. **Must**; the juice of the grape before fermentation.

[302] 353. **Argos**; a city in Argolis, a province in the northeast part of the Peloponnesian peninsula in Greece.

[303] 373. **Queen Venus.** It was to Venus, the goddess of love, that unhappy lovers were accustomed to turn for aid.

[304] 391. **Holpen**; the old past participle of the word help.

[305] 516. **Damascus**; the chief city of Syria.

[306] 535. **Saturn** (Cronus or Time) was the father of Jupiter. Under his rule came the so-called Golden Age of the world.

[307] 671. **Phœnician.** The Phœnicians lived on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and were famous for their commerce and trade.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. He entered Bowdoin College at the early age of fifteen, graduating there in 1825. He then spent about three years abroad preparing himself for a position, as Professor of Modern Languages at Bowdoin,
[Pg 280] which he took on his return. There he remained six years, leaving in 1834 to become a professor in Harvard College. His first book of poems, *Voices of the Night*, appeared in 1839, and two years later he published *Ballads and other Poems*. Both volumes were received cordially and had a wide circulation. Other important later works were *Evangeline* (1847), *Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), and *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (finished 1873). In 1854 he left off teaching and settled down to a quiet literary life. During a trip to Europe in 1868 he was given honorary degrees by both Oxford and Cambridge. He died in Boston in 1882. It is a testimonial to his popularity in England that his bust was placed in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, the only memorial to an American author there.

Longfellow was a scholarly and cultured poet, influenced much by foreign literatures and proficient in translation. His verse is rarely impassioned, but is usually simple, smooth, and polished. America has had no finer narrative poet; and it is unquestionable that this form of poetry was well adapted to his genius, which was fluent, but not often strongly emotional.

The Wreck of the Hesperus (Page 211)

Longfellow's diary for the date December 17, 1839, contains the following entry: "News of shipwrecks horrible on the coast. Twenty bodies washed ashore near Gloucester, one lashed to a piece of wreck. There is a reef called Norman's Woe, where many of these took place; among others the schooner Hesperus—I must write a ballad upon this." Two weeks later he wrote: "I sat last evening till twelve o'clock by my fire, smoking, when suddenly it came into my mind to write the 'Ballad of the Schooner Hesperus,' which I accordingly did. Then I went to bed, but I could
[Pg 281] not sleep. New thoughts were running in my mind, and I got up to add them to the ballad. It was three by the clock. I then went to bed and fell asleep. I feel pleased with the ballad. It hardly cost me an effort. It did not come into my mind by lines, but by stanzas."

Published first in 1841 in *Ballads and Other Poems*.

Paul Revere's Ride (Page 214)

Published in 1863 as *The Landlord's Tale* in the first series of *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

General Gage, commander of the British forces in Boston and vicinity, despatched, on the night of April 18, 1775, a body of troops to seize stores said to be concealed at Concord. According to the story, Paul Revere spread the warning throughout the surrounding country, and when the British arrived at Lexington they found a small body of militia lined up to oppose them. A skirmish ensued in which the first blood of the war was spilled, several being killed and others wounded.

[308] 2. **Paul Revere** (1735-1818) was a goldsmith and engraver who became one of the most active of the colonial patriots.

[309] 9. **North Church.** There is some dispute as to what church is referred to here. A tablet on the front of Christ Church, Salem Street, Boston, points that out as the church from which the lanterns were hung. Other good authorities, however, support the claims of the North Church, formerly standing in North Square, but now torn down.

[310] 88. **Medford** is on the Mystic River about five miles northwest of Boston.

[311] 102. **Concord** is about nineteen miles northwest of Boston.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

John Greenleaf Whittier was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, December 17, 1807, and died
[Pg 282] at Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, September 7, 1892. Whittier's ancestors for several generations had been New England farmers on the same farm where the original Whittier immigrant had settled. The family was too poor to give Whittier an education, so that two terms at Haverhill Academy, the tuition for which he paid by shoemaking and school teaching,

completed his school training. He early became interested in journalism, and was employed in editorial work in Boston and in Hartford. When abolition became an agitation, Whittier became one of the leaders. He was instrumental in bringing the English Abolitionist, George Thompson, to America; and, while on a tour with him, was stoned and shot at by a mob in Concord, New Hampshire. Later, when he was editor of the *Philadelphia Freeman*, his office was burned by a mob. During this period he wrote many anti-slavery poems, such as the *Ballads*, *Anti-Slavery Poems*, etc., of 1838 and the *Voices of Freedom* of 1841. In spite of his interest in politics, for he was twice elected to the Massachusetts legislature, Whittier led a very simple life in accordance with his Quaker beliefs. He never married, partly, it seems, because he had the care of his mother and sister Elizabeth, until the latter's death in 1864. The latter part of his life he lived at Amesbury and Danvers, Massachusetts.

Whittier's poetry is of three kinds. He is at times more thoroughly than any other writer the poet of New England country life; again he is essentially an anti-slavery poet; and, finally, he has written many religious poems. His best-known poem is *Snow-Bound*, which gives an admirable picture of a farmer's life in the hard storms of a New England winter.

Skipper Ireson's Ride (Page 219)

[312] 3. **Apuleius's Golden Ass.** Apuleius was a Roman satirist who lived in the first half of the second century. His most celebrated work was *Metamorphoses, or the Golden Ass*, a satirical romance to ridicule Christianity.

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[313] 4. **Calender's horse of brass.** See the story in the *Arabian Nights*.

[314] 6. **Islam's prophet on Al-Borák.** Mohammed was believed to make his journeys between heaven and earth upon a creature, which some say was a camel, named Al-Borák. (The word signifies lightning.)

[315] 26. **Bacchus**; the god of wine and revelry. A Bacchanalian revel was a common subject for decorations.

[316] 30. **Mænads**; women who attended Bacchus, the god of wine, waving, as they danced and sang, the thyrsus, a wand entwined with ivy and surmounted by a pine cone.

[317] 35. **Chaleur Bay**; an inlet of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, between Gaspé and New Brunswick. It is a great resort for mackerel fishing.

Barclay of Ury (Page 222)

"Among the earliest converts to the doctrines of the Friends in Scotland was Barclay of Ury, an old and distinguished soldier, who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus, in Germany. As a Quaker, he became the object of persecution and abuse at the hands of the magistrates and populace. None bore the indignities of the mob with greater patience and nobleness of soul than this once proud gentleman and soldier. One of his friends, on an occasion of uncommon rudeness, lamented that he should be treated so harshly in his old age who had been so honored before. 'I find more satisfaction,' said Barclay, 'as well as honor, in being thus insulted for my religious principles, than when, a few years ago, it was usual for the magistrates, as I passed the city of Aberdeen, to meet me on the road and conduct me to public entertainment in their hall, and then escort me out again, to gain my favor.'"

—Whittier.

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[318] 1. **Aberdeen**; a city in northeastern Scotland.

[319] 2. **Kirk**; the Scotch word for church.

[320] 3. **Laird**; lord.

[321] 10. **Carlin**; Scotch word for old woman.

[322] 35. **Lützen**; a town in Saxony, province of Prussia.

[323] 56. **Tilly.** "The barbarities of Count de Tilly after the siege of Magdeburg made such an impression upon our forefathers that the phrase 'like old Tilly' is still heard sometimes in New England of any piece of special ferocity."

—Whittier.

[324] 57. **Walloon**; from certain provinces of Belgium.

[325] 81. **Snooded.** The snood was a band which a Scottish maiden wore in her hair as a sign of her maidenhood.

[326] 99. **Tolbooth**; a name commonly applied to a Scottish prison.

[327] 117. **Fallow**; ploughed but unsown land.

Barbara Frietchie (Page 226)

"This poem was written in strict conformity to the account of the incident as I had it from respectable and trustworthy sources. It has since been the subject of a good deal of conflicting testimony, and the story was probably incorrect in some of its details. It is admitted by all that Barbara Frietchie was no myth, but a worthy and highly esteemed gentlewoman, intensely loyal and a hater of the Slavery Rebellion, holding her Union flag sacred and keeping it with her Bible; that when the Confederates halted before her house, and entered her dooryard, she denounced

them in vigorous language, shook her cane in their faces, and drove them out; and when General Burnside's troops followed close upon Jackson's, she waved her flag and cheered them. It is stated that May Quantrell, a brave and loyal lady in another part of the city, did wave her flag in sight of the Confederates. It is possible that there has been a blending of the two incidents."

[Pg 285] —Whittier.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1809. He studied at Phillips Academy, Andover, and later at Harvard College, where he graduated in the famous class of 1829. He tried law for a year, but gave this up for medicine. In 1833 he went abroad, returning in 1835 for a medical degree at Harvard. He at once began the active practice of his profession, but accepted a professorship at Dartmouth in 1838. He remained there only a short time, coming back again to Boston, where he married and resumed his work as a physician. In 1847 he became Parkman Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at Harvard, and held this position until 1882. In 1857, through the influence of James Russell Lowell, he began to contribute regularly to the *Atlantic Monthly*. After 1882 he devoted himself almost exclusively to writing and lecturing. He died in 1894 in Boston.

While Holmes is best known as the author of *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* and other prose works, he published numerous poems, most of them humorous in tone. Many of them were written for specific occasions, and as such are distinguished for their wit and cleverness rather than for strong emotion or profound thought.

Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle (Page 230)

First published in 1875 at the time of the centennial of the battle of Bunker Hill.

The so-called battle of Bunker Hill was the first important engagement of the Revolutionary War. On June 17, 1775, five thousand British soldiers under Howe, Clinton, and Pigott attacked a smaller number of Americans then stationed on Breed's Hill near Boston, under Colonel William
[Pg 286] Prescott. They were twice beaten back, but captured the hill on their third charge. The British loss was about twelve hundred men, while the Americans lost only four hundred, among them, however, being the patriot, Dr. Joseph Warren.

[328] 2. **Times that tried men's souls**; a quotation from the first of a series of tracts called *The Crisis* by Thomas Paine, 1776.

[329] 3. **Whig and Tory.** In the Colonies the Whigs werethe Revolutionists, while the Tories were the supporters of the King. The Whigs were also called Rebels.

[330] 5. **April running battle**; the fight at Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775, when the British forces were led by Lord Percy.

[331] 16. **Mohawks**; one of the tribes of the Six Nations notorious for their cruelty in the French and Indian War.

[332] 42. **Banyan**; a colored morning-gown.

[333] 67. **Dan'l Malcolm**; an allusion to an inscription on a gravestone in Copp's Hill Burial Ground, Boston. The inscription is as follows:—

"Here lies buried in a
Stone Grave 10 feet deep
Capt. Daniel Malcolm Mercht
Who departed this Life
October 23, 1769,
Aged 44 years,
A true son of Liberty,
A Friend to the Publick,
An Enemy to oppression,
And one of the foremost
In opposing the Revenue Acts
On America."

[334] 147. **J. S. Copley** (1737-1815) was a distinguished American portrait-painter.

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- in LOCHNIVAR, l.34, changed bridgroom to bridegroom
- in HOHENLINDEN, l.89, changed "." to ","
- in ENOCH ARDEN corrected line number to 355 from 455
- in ending advert, changed Lambs' to Lamb's

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