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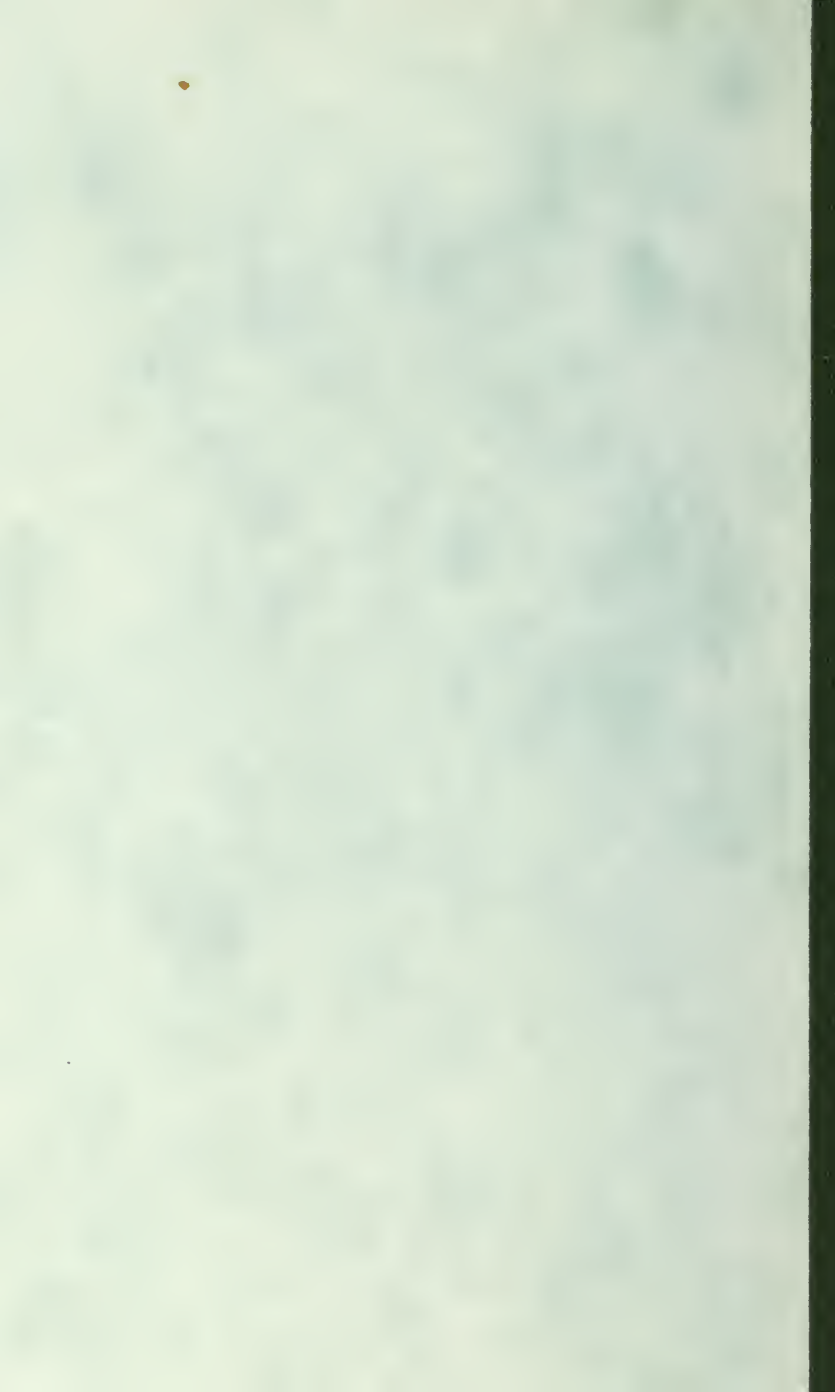
Ode on the Arrival of the Potentates in
Oxford and Judicium Regale

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O D E
ON THE ARRIVAL
OF THE
POTENTATES IN OXFORD.

[Miltman, Henry Hart]

ODE

ON

THE ARRIVAL

OF

THE POTENTATES IN OXFORD:

AND

JUDICIUM REGALE,

AN ODE.

OXFORD:

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1814

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O D E
ON THE ARRIVAL

OF THE
POTENTATES IN OXFORD.



I.

HAPPY our doom, when war's wild earthquake hurl'd
From their proud thrones the cities of the world,
 Wrapt in a dizzy hurricane of flames,
Still sweetly slumber'd our high arching bowers,
And the calm shadows of our hoary towers
 On the blue quiet of our waveless Thames.
Oh, happy! in those dismal days of shame
When this fair earth and all her pomp became
 A bauble for a despot's wayward hand ;
High Fame for us her gorgeous vaunts unroll'd,
We liv'd amid the great, the sage of old,
 Brave souls that erst the bark of Freedom mann'd ;
From barter'd Ulm we fled to Leuctra's strife,
And lost in Cato's death Napoleon's life.

X.

II.

For the tame niggard earth seemed now to bear
 Souls only of that white and coward hue,
 That to their pale complexion basely true,
 Made virtue, and made wisdom of despair,
 Shaming the God that made them free—each neck
 Bow'd to a being of the same mean dust,
 A giant but in wild ambition's lust,
 Nations of slaves stoop'd vassal at his beck.
 But Britain from the world and the world's shame
 Sate sever'd, like her kindred Ocean free,
 The rampire of her glories, NELSON's name,
 And her broad flags that crimson'd the wide sea.

III.

Oh, wild to deem that ought but great and brave
 Could spring, Pultawa's Conqueror, from thy stem,
 Or the rich stars of Frederick's diadem
 Circle that abject thing, a royal slave.
 In savage grandeur of portentous guilt,
 Flush'd to fierce strength by blood that he hath spilt,
 The wolf stalks grimly o'er the blasted plain,
 Upsprings the Lion from his monarch lair,
 With his broad mane's dun floating, loads the air,
 And glares the faint intruder from his reign.

Yet, yet thou profligate of human life ;
 But from cold waste of carnage dread in strife !
 Thine hour of utterest anguish yet shall be
 When human blood shall cease to flow for thee.

IV.

Now are the clouds that wrapt thy terrors broken,
 Now glorious hath fair Freedom's sun awoken.
 On the proud Spaniard's mountains waste and rude
 A wavering wild and fitful blaze it falls,
 On Zaragoza's stately solitude,
 With sad proud splendor gilds the broken walls.
 His armed rest Vimeira's Lord hath burst,
 Where, like a falcon his strong plumes he nurst,
 Upleap'd on Victory's car, and cried, " Away,"
 And taught her fiery steeds to own a master's sway—
 By Talavera roll'd that thundering car,
 Those thirsty wheels were slak'd in Douro's tide,
 Tower'd Salamanca heard its rush afar,
 Vittoria pamper'd the fierce courser's pride ;
 Now on the Pyrenean snows they prance,
 Now sweep in dizzy speed the purple plains of France.

V.

Gone is earth's Lord in pomp and splendor forth
 With all his revenue of human blood,

Eager to fatten with that lavish flood
 The wild and wintry deserts of the north.
 Slowly with forward front and backward tread,
 Sad to be barr'd the joy of fight, recede

The fierce Muscovians' dark unbroken train
 They may not sink by human arm o'erthrown,
 Those harness'd Southern Myriad's—God alone
 Whom he hath rais'd, shall spurn to dust again.
 Shall then the winds on Moscow's royal wall

Rock the proud banners of a Stranger's Foe.
 No, Ancient and Majestic Empress! no,
 Rather than be a slave, be not at all.
 Lo to the Heaven her towery pomp aspire
 In one wild mass of red uprolling fire.
 With wither'd gaze and pale foreboding mien
 The stranger walk'd where Moscow once had been;
 The smouldering walls nod peril o'er his head,
 And ashes are the pavement of his tread.

VI.

But God hath loos'd his ministers of wrath,
 In one white restless dome the welkin lowers;
 The tempest from his rushing pinion showers
 Bleak icy arrows o'er the woful path;

And dangerous as that keen and deathful sky
 Sweeps o'er the plain that cloudy chivalry.
 By his warp'd standard dreams the dying man
 Alive but to drear consciousness of pain,
 How soft the summer gales of France would fan
 The parching frost, that harrows up his brain ;
 Or treads slow struggling through the drifting snow
 O'er myriads in their frosty sleep below.
 Where is the Lord, the Chief of battles where ?
 Do the bold frostwinds ice Imperial breath ?
 Rich in their glories, doth he nobly share
 The cold and dreary fellowship of death ?
 Fall deep, ye shades ! be dark, thou wintry night
 And veil the glories of the Hero's flight.

VII.

No steel of vengeance and no bolt of war
 Check the fleet rushing of that lonely car ;
 No huntsman base may drive that mighty game,
 But royal Conquerors crown his fall with fame,
 Leipsic ! be proud though mournful for that day
 When the helm'd squadron of embattled Kings,
 Beset their frantic quarry, fierce at bay,
 And hemm'd him with the battle's iron wings,

For flight, for flight he bursts the toils—and then
 The bold Silesian tracks him to his den ;
 With soul of youth, and hoary front of age,
 Grapples the Savage in his desperate rage.

VIII.

Paris ! uprear on high thy gorgeous thrones,
 Lo at thy gates high Victory's sceptred sons.
Not there the dark revenge of injur'd foe,
 Nor the fierce drunken pride of prosperous strife.

X Even to the sunken master spirit of woe
 Is given that worthless boon, his abject life ;
 And the sole penalty of France must be
By those she strove to fetter, to be free.
 So rich in mercy had great Julius come
 A mailed conqueror to his native Rome,
 The Utican had died a tamer death,
 And Brutus steel clung idle to its sheath.
 And lo, where Britain's royal banner brings
 The image of thy old majestic Kings ;
 For all her wasted wealth, her slaughter'd lives
 Take the return, O France, that Britain gives.

IX.

X Ye mighty Kings, a flatterer's honied rhyme
 Were poison to a free born Briton's tongue,

Burst be the harp, that with its luscious chime

Tinkles to slumber souls that scoff at wrong.

× ×,

By those ye sway is witness'd what ye are,

Go search the nations! walk your subject earth!

If all be peaceful, free, and blissful there;

Thank Heaven that ye were born of royal birth,

× ×.





JUDICIUM REGALE,

AN ODE.

JUDICIUM REGALE,

AN ODE.

I SLEPT, and as in solemn judgment court
Amid a tall imperial city sate
The sceptred of the world ; their regal port
Shew'd lords of earth, and as on empire's fate
They commun'd, grave each brow, and front serene,
Holy and high their royalty of mien :
Seem'd nor pale passion, nor blind interest base
Within that kingly Sanhedrin had place.

Abroad were sounds as of a storm gone past,
Or midnight on a dismal battle field,
Aye some drear trumpet spake its lonely blast,
Aye in deep distance sad artillery peal'd
Booming their sullen thunders—then ensued
The majesty of silence—on her throne
Of plain or mountain, listening sate and lone

Each nation to those crowned Peers' decree,
 And this wide world of restless beings rude
 Lay mute and breathless as a summer sea.

To the Universal Judge, that conclave proud
Their diadem-starr'd foreheads lowly bow'd :
 When at some viewless summoner's stern call
 Uprose in place the Imperial Criminal.

In that wan face nor ancient majesty
 Left wither'd splendor dim, nor old renown
 Lofty disdain in that sad sunken eye ;
 No giant ruin even in wreck elate
 Frowning dominion o'er imperious fate,
 But one to native lowliness cast down.
 A sullen careless desperation gave
 The hollow semblance of intrepid grief,
 Not that heroic patience nobly brave
 That even from misery wrings a proud relief ;
 Nor the dark pride of haughty spirits of ill,
 That from the towering grandeur of their sin,
 Wear on the brow triumphant gladness still,
 Heedless of racking agony within ;

Nor penitence was there, nor pale remorse,
 Nor memory of his fall from kingly state,
 And warrior glory in his sun-like course,
 Fortune his slave, and Victory his mate.
 'Twere doubt if that dark form could truly feel,
 Or were indeed a shape and soul of steel.

With that from North and South an ireful train
 Forth came that mighty Culprit to arraign.

The first was as a savage Horseman bold,
 Uncouth his rude attire, his bearing wild,
 But gallant was his brow that lightly smil'd
 As seeming war some merry sport to hold :
 The air whereon his fleet steed seem'd to prance
 Flam'd with the steely bickering of his lance.
 And on the waves of his broad banner's fold
 An old barbaric capital he bore,
 Like some tall grove of pinnacle and spire
 Or snowy white or gleaming rich with gold,
 But the red havock of upspringing fire
 A fatal flood of glory seem'd to pour ;
 And aye from gilded roof or dome upbroke
 In dusky pillars huge the cloudy smoke.

Nor word that Horseman spake, but as he came
Wav'd his grim standard like a pall of flame.

x And next came one all trim in fearful grace

And tall majestic symmetry of war,

Musquet and bayonet flashing bright and far,

Deliberate valour in his slow firm pace,

And scorn of death—him at the portal arch

Saluted blithe old Frederick's bugle march.

Heavy his charge—of lordly King bow'd down

In his own royal city to the frown,

Of the base minion to a despot's hate—^a

Then blanch'd the Soldier's bronz'd and furrow'd cheek,

While of coarse taunting outrage he 'gan speak,

To her the beautiful, the delicate,

XX The queenly, but too gentle for a Queen—

But in sweet pride upon that insult keen

She smil'd—then drooping mute, though broken hearted,

To the cold comfort of the grave departed.

The next like some old Baron's lordly son

Bore what a rich imperial crown had been,

But from its stars the pride of light was gone ;

The joy of vengeance on that warrior's mien

^a Alluding to a governor being set over the King of Prussia in Berlin.

Was chasing the red hues of ancient shame,
 Not of Marengo's fair-fought field he told,
 Nor the wide waves of blood huge Danube roll'd;
 But him that in strong Ulm play'd that foul game,
 x Bartering his country and his soul for gold. *See p. 5.*
 And that fair royal Maid, by battle won
 Like thing that hath nor will nor sense, and borne
 A bright and beauteous trophy to adorn
 The brittle grandeur of an upstart's throne.

Next came a stately Lady, once was she
 Queen of the Nations, of her despot sway
 Earth boasted, every flood and every sea
 Water'd her tributary realms, and day
 Rose only on her empire, now it seem'd
 That she had cast her cumbrous crown away
 To slumber in her vales that basking lie
 In the luxurious azure of her sky;
 On Saint or Virgin, such as Raphael dream'd,
 In almost blameless fond idolatry,
 Speechless to gaze, and bow the adoring knee;
 In the soul's secret chambers to prolong
 The rapturous ravishment of harp and song.

Music was in her steps, and all her eye
 Was dark and eloquent with ecstasy.
 Rapine her charge—of Florence princely halls,
 And that fall'n Empress by old Tiber's side
 Reft of the sole sad relics of her pride,
 For the iron conqueror ravish'd from her walls
 Those shapes that in their breathing colours warm
 In tall arcade or saintly chapel liv'd,
 And all wherein the soul of Greece surviv'd
 The more than human of each marble form.

Of the proud bridegroom of the Adrian Sea,
 Once like his bride magnificent and free,
 Sunk to a bond-slave's desperate apathy.

And him the holiest deem'd the chosen of God,
 Bow'd to a coward of an earthly nod.

And next came one, the bravery of whose front
 Crested hereditary pride, his arms
 Were dark and dinted by rude battle's brunt,
 Of Sovean young he spake by wizard charms
 Of hollow smiling treachery from the throne

Of two fair worlds to felon durance lur'd,
 A King in narrow prison walls immur'd :
 And some rude islander's soul-groveling son
 Set up to be a princely nation's Lord :—

But then the Spaniard with fierce brow and bright
 Brandish'd the cloudy flaming of his sword,
 Full was his soul of Zaragoza's fight,
 And the high Pyrenean snows o'erleap'd,
 And other Pavia's with Frank carnage heap'd.

The brother of his wrongs and of his wrath
 Was with him in the triumph of his path.

He of his exile Prince 'gan loudly boast,

To be a sceptred slave, a pageant King,

He scorn'd, and on his fleet bark's gallant wing
 For kingly freedom the wild ocean crost.

Whom saw I then in port and pride, a Queen

Come walking o'er her own obsequious sea ?

I knew thee well, the valiant, rich and free—

As when old Rome, her Roman virtue tame,

Gaz'd, when in arms that bold Dictator came

With the iron ransom of her Capitol

Startled to flight the fierce insulting Gaul—

Camillus of mankind! thy regal mien
 Gladden'd all earth, the nations from their rest
 Joyful upleap'd, with modest front elate,
 Like one that hath proud conscience in her breast,
 Thou brakest the blank silence—"Woe and hate
 To this bad man for those my good and great,
 That sleep amid the Spaniard's mountains rude
 In the sad beauty of the hero's fate.
 To this bad man immortal gratitude,
 For he hath taught who slaves the free of earth
 Fettereth the whirlwind: hath given glorious birth
 To deeds that dwarf my old majestic fame,
 Make **BLAKE** and **MARLBOROUGH** languid sound and tame
 To **NELSON** and that Chief to whom defeat
 Is like an undiscover'd star—hath shown
 More than the Macedonian victories vain
 To rivet on the earth the Oppressor's chain:
 As little will yon Sun's empyrean throne
 Endure a mortal seat, as this wide globe
 Be one man's appanage, or my fair isle
 That precious gem in ocean's azure robe,
 Cast Freedom's banner down, by force or guile
 Master'd, and forfeit earth's renown and love,
 And her bright visions of high meed above.

Then all at once did from all earth arise
 Fierce imprecations on that man of sin,
 And all the loaded winds came heavy in
 With exultations and with agonics.
 From the lone coldness of the widow's bed,
 The feverish pillow of the orphan's head,
 From dying men earth's woful valleys heaping,
 From smouldering cities in their ashes sleeping,
 Like the hoarse tumbling of a torrent flood
 Mingled the dismal concord—"blood for blood."

But then arose a faded shape and pale,
 Once had she been a peerless princely dame,
 Downcast her grace of grief, she seem'd to veil
 The mournful beauty of her face for shame.
 And is this she whose sprightly laughing mirth
 Was like the blithe spring on the festal earth;
 Aye dancing at the moonlight close of day,
 'Mid purple vineyards, graceful, light, and gay;
 Or in high pomp and gallant pride of port
 Holding rich revel in her gorgeous court?—

Abrupt her speech and wild—"When I 'gan wake
 From that my sleep of madness, all around

Of human blood a broad and livid lake
 Was in my splendid cities, mound on mound
 Rose peopl'd with my noble princely dead,
 And o'er them the fell anarch, Murther, stood
 Grimly reposing in his weary mood—
 I turn'd the guilty trembling of mine head,
 There humankind had leagued their arms of dread
 'Gainst the Blasphemer of fair Freedom's name,
 Heaven was no hope, for heaven I dared disclaim.

High in the flaming car of Victory riding,
 From Alp to Alp his chamois warriors guiding,
 The peril of wild Lodi's arch bestriding,
 I saw yon Chieftain in his morn of fame,
 Cities and armies at his beck sank down,
 And in the gaudy colours of renown
 The fabling Orient vested his young name.
 The bright and baleful Meteor I ador'd,
 Low bow'd I down, and said—"Be thou my Lord!"

Like old and ruinous towers, the ancient thrones
 Crumbled, and dynasties of elder time,
 The banners of my conquest-plumed sons
 Flouted the winds of many a distant clime.

On necks of vanquish'd kings I fix'd my seat,
And the broad Rhine roll'd vassal at my feet.

Thrice did the indignant Nations league their might,
Thrice the red darkness of the battle night
Folded the recreant terror of their flight.
Realms sack'd and ravag'd empires sooth'd my toils,
And Satrap Chiefs were Monarchs from my spoils.
In solitude of freedom that rich Queen
Sate in her sanctity of waves serene.

From cliff and beach, dominion in their motion,
I saw her stately navies broad array,
Like jealous lords at watch, that none but they
Adulterate with their fair majestic ocean.
And cries I heard like frenzy and dismay
Of NELSON, NELSON deepening on their way.
But what to me though red the western deep
With other fires than of the setting sun ;
And what to me though round Trafalgar's steep
My haughty pennon'd gallies one by one
Come rolling their huge wrecks on the waves' sweep.
Go rule thy brawling and tumultuous sea,
Briton, but leave my servile earth to me.

And what to me though in my dungeons deep
 By this new Charlemagne dark deeds were done—
 Will the stones start and babble to the sun
 How that bold Briton, Wright, and Pichegru sleep?

At noon of night I heard the drum of death,
 Like evil spirits on the blasted heath
 By the drear torchlight iron men were met.
 The mockery of justice soon was past,
 Again the drum its dismal warning beat.
 Then flashing musquets deathful lustre cast
 A moment on the victim, he sedate
 In calm disdain of even a felon's fate,
 His royal breast bar'd to the soldier's mark,
 Seeming to pity with his steady sight
 Those poor mechanic murderers—then 'twas dark,
 All but yon crown'd Assassin's visage bright,
 Who wav'd his torch in wolvish wild delight.
 O blood of Condé! Could thy spirit rest
 In thy tame country's cold ungrateful breast?
 Yet in my drunkenness of pride I mock'd
 Mean crimes that would a petty tyrant shame,
 For still in glory's cradle was I rock'd,
 Mine eagle eyrie crown'd the steep of fame.

Nought heeded I, that the proud Son of Spain,
 Like a fierce courser that has burst his chain,
 Shook the base slavery from his floating mane.
 And that new British Arthur's virgin shield
 Won its rich blazon on Vimeira's field.

For lo, my cities throw their portal's wide,
 Gorgeous my festal streets as when of old
 The monarchs met upon the plain of gold—
 Lo on my throne a bright and royal bride.

Vain all my pomp, imperial beauty vain
 The reveller in battles to restrain.
 And at his word, as at the fabl'd wand
 Of old magician, from the teeming land
 Myriad on myriad harness'd warriors rise ;
 The earth was darkened with excess of light,
 Line after line, insufferably bright,
 The black artillery in their cloudy might,
 Impious defiance launch'd against the skies.
 With tamer sounds did that wild heathen^b vaunt
 Amid his thund'rous heavens high Jove to daunt.

^b Salmoeneus.

Day after day I saw their pomp depart ;
 Then said the haughty frenzy of my heart,
 When o'er this world thy victor wheels are driven,
 Wilt thou go vanquish the bright stars of Heaven ?

Was mid the nations rival hurrying
 To crowd beneath my passing eagle's wing ;
 Was in my captains many a sceptred king.

And lo, the northern skies were all on fire
 As with some mighty Empire's funeral pyre !
 Why bring they not proud Catherine's trophies home ?
 I hear the sound of wheels—" They come, they come."

A solitary sound—no pomp of war,
 One dastard pale accomplice of his flight,
 He comes, whom earth, and all earth's sons obey,
 The peerless and the paragon of might :
 The pinnacle of the Persian runaway
 Was glory to his lone and hurrying car.

I ask'd for those in fight in triumph tried,
 The partners of his peril and his pride.
 He in a tyrant's mockery of my woe,
 Bade me go seek them in the Scythian snow.

Then felt I what a pitiful tame slave,
 Was I, who vaunted me mankind's sole queen,
 The satellite of one man's wayward spleen—
 The remnant of my fair, my young, my brave,
 Were rent once more to forge the adamant chain
 Burst by the nations, who with one accord
 Shook the bright vengeance of the freeman's sword—
 Another year—and the broad Rhine again
 Shrouded the sceptred fugitive's pale train,
 Then turn'd a rebel, roll'd her free waves to the main.

And now the banners of the embattled world
 Their folds of vengeance on my vales unfurl'd.
 Oh, bloody was the evening of thine ire,
 Thou gorgeous comet of disastrous fire!

I wont to gaze as from some quiet star
 Deluging slaughter this fair earth o'erwhelm,
 In the rich bosom of my sunny realm
 Gave quarry to the ravening dogs of war.

But mercy shone upon the merciless,
 Strong but to save and valiant but to bless,

No ruthless Cæsars clad in blood and flame,
 Royal in virtue the Avengers came.
 To whom I went a wolf, came lambs to me,
 I said, "Be slave, O earth!" but they—"O France, be free.

"For yon dark chief of woe, and guilt, and strife,
 O sceptred Judges! punish him with life.
 Fear not he seek with the old Roman pride,
 That weakness to the noble soul allied,
 To die as Cato, and as Brutus died.
 Fear not that in his abject heart he show
 That martyr fortitude, that smiles in woe.
 By him shall that great secret be betray'd,
 Of what poor stuff are earth's dread tyrants made.
 Oh, let him live to be despis'd, to see
 France happy, and the glorious nations free,
 Death were delight to that deep misery!"—

Then did that kingly conclave, with one voice,
 Pass the dread sentence on the gloomy man;
 In his soul's icy deadness he alone
 By others' woes seem'd harden'd to his own.

From land to land the penal tidings ran ;
Earth lifted up her rich face to rejoice,
The bright blue heavens bade wintry warring cease,
And spring came dancing o'er a world at peace.

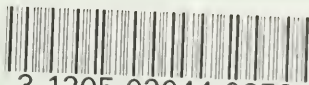
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