

LAYS
AND
BALLADS



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THE KREBS COLLECTION
(LINGUISTICS)

Gmit Krebs.



J. YENNIE

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Smedley, Menella Bute

Lays and Ballads
from
English History
etc.

By S. M.

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TO

THE SEVEN DEAR CHILDREN

FOR WHOSE AMUSEMENT THESE VERSES WERE ORIGINALLY WRITTEN

THEY ARE NOW MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

Sanct George



for Merrie England.

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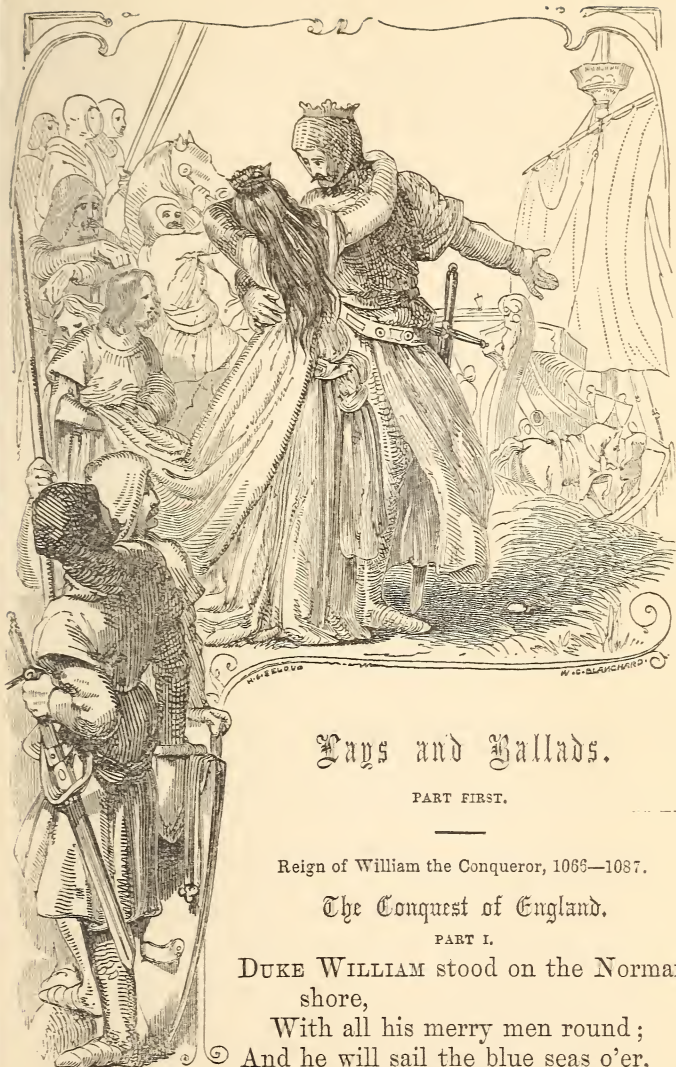
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Days and Ballads.

PART FIRST.

Reign of William the Conqueror, 1066—1087.

The Conquest of England.

PART I.

DUKE WILLIAM stood on the Norman
shore,

With all his merry men round ;
And he will sail the blue seas o'er,
To land on English ground.

Saint Edward made him, ere he died,
Heir to the English throne ;
But Saxon Harold, in his pride,
Hath seized it for his own.

So the duke hath summon'd his vassals brave
From castle, cot, and tower ;
And he will cross the rushing wave
To reckon with Harold's power.

They came, his liegemen stout and true,
With the serfs whom they commanded ;
Some brought many, and some brought few,
But none came empty-handed.

By the trumpet-sound they gather around,
And their banners stream on high,
And their spears shine bright as the stars of night
In a clear and frosty sky.

Whence comes yon graceful bark which glides
To the spot where the duke is standing,
And leaps the crest of the dancing tides
With an air of proud commanding ?

The sails are of silk, and flutteringly
They wave in the breezes mild !
At the prow is a sculptured effigy
Of a fair and smiling child.

But who is the lady of lofty brow,
Bright eye, and arching lip,
Who waveth her white hand from the prow
Of the gay and stately ship ?

She is known from afar by her queenly air,
And the circlet on her brows ;
'Tis the Duchess Matilda, wise and fair,
Duke William's honour'd spouse.

To land full lightly vaulted she,
And up to the duke she came—
“ My lord, accept this ship from me ;
The Mora is its name.

Its chambers are deck'd for a monarch fit,
With cushions of velvet piled ;
The form at the prow—look well on it—
'Tis the form of our youngest child.

My hand it was that 'broider'd the sail,
Though the tear was in mine eye—
God send my lord a favouring gale,
And a joyous victory !”

“ Thanks, lady, thanks,” the duke replied,
“ Right princely is thy gift ;
Soon leaping from its painted side,
My good sword will I lift.

When its gay pennon streameth far,
My heart shall look to thee,
As the pilot's eye to the northern star,
Guiding us o'er the sea.

Farewell, my lady and my wife,
So loyal, fair, and true ;
If I come back to thee with life,
I will come with honour too.”

“ Farewell, my hero—kighthood's flower—
My husband and my lord !”
Right tender was that parting hour,
Right fond each parting word.

The lady's tears, e'en while she spake,
Did fast and freely start ;
And many a sigh did slowly break
From Duke William's mighty heart.

“ Adieu ! ” he cried : in speechless grief
 Matilda sought her bower ;
 And to his good ship sprang the chief,
 With all his armèd power.

Away with a breeze that curls the seas
 And scatters the foam as a cloud,
 Each light bark rides on the bounding tides,
 Like a knight on a courser proud.

They sail'd all the night ; but when morning shone bright,
 And the duke he gazed around,
 Not a sail could be traced on the ocean's wide waste,
 Not a bark could there be found.

“ How may this be,” quoth the duke at last,
 “ That we are thus left alone ? ”
 My wife's fair ship, thou travellest fast ;
 Of our comrades see I none.

Go up to the mast-head speedily,
 My squire. What meets thine eye ? ”
 “ Nought save the grey far-stretching sea,
 And the cloudy morning sky.”

“ Now, by my faith,” said Duke William then,
 “ Ill shall we fare I trow,
 If I am met without my men
 By the angry English now.

Go up again—what seest thou now,
 My squire so brave and true ? ”
 “ Where the blue sea-line with the sky doth join
 A darksome speck I view.”

“ A babe may grow to a monarch free,
 To a storm a little cloud ;
 God send that tiny speck may be
 My gallant fleet and proud !

Go up once more—gaze o'er the sea :
Good squire, what seest thou there ? ”
“ Hurra ! ” cried he, “ ’tis a forest I see
Of tall masts rising fair.

They are coming, they are coming, as come the clouds
When the storm gathers fast on high ;
When noiseless and light, and too swift for sight,
They cover the wide blue sky.”

The sea grew white with a thousand sails
On its distant billows riding,
Spreading their wings to the wanton gales,
Like the birds around them gliding.

The fresh breeze fann'd the Conqueror's cheek,
And the Conqueror's heart beat high—
“ Our arms are strong, and our foes are weak,
We are sailing to victory.”

PART II.

The morn was bright, the sky was blue,
And each Norman heart was gay,
When swift as a bird the Mora flew
Into fair Hastings bay.

Full soon Duke William sprang to land
With a proud and knightly grace ;
But he miss'd his step on the treach'rous sand,—
He fell upon his face !

Now foul befall thee, treach'rous shore,
Thou hast laid a good knight low ;
A knight who hath never fallen before
By the stroke of any foe.

Ill be thy name, thou faithless sand :
Of foes we may all beware ;
But how can the brave heart understand
That which is false and fair ?

Pale grew the cheeks of the Normans then,—
“ An omen ! ” they loudly cry :
“ Let us go o’er the main to our homes again ;
We will not stay here to die.”

But up leap’d the joyous duke from earth,
And shook his fair plume on high ;
Untamed was his laugh in its ringing mirth,
Unquench’d was his proud bright eye.

His grasp it was full of the yellow sea-sand,
And he shouted, “ My men, what ho !
See I have England in my hand—
Do ye think I will let it go ? ”

Loudly then answer’d his warriors bold :
“ True be thy daring word !
We will follow thee till our hearts wax cold—
God save our conquering lord ! ”

They built on the shore a fort of wood,
They framed it cunningly ;
Its beams so strong, and its walls so good,
They had brought with them o’er the sea.

But they were not aware that a knight stood there,
And watch’d them whiles they wrought ;
Behind an oak-tree unseen stood he,
And gazed on the growing fort.

Then with eager speed he mounted his steed,
And away to Earl Harold he hied :
“ Evil, great king, are the news I bring—
Duke William hath cross’d the tide.

Duke William of Normandy, mighty and strong,
He hath landed at Pevensie ;
And with him a fierce and a terrible throng,
Of the knights of his own countrie.

They have built them a fort upon Hastings beach,
The like was never known ;
No time is there now for dallying speech,
Arm, arm thee for thy throne ! ”

“ I laugh at thy news,” Lord Harold he cried ;
“ For in annal and in song
Shall be told, how we taught this man of pride
His weakness and his wrong.

Arm, my brave Saxons, mount and arm—
Ye know that our cause is just ;
Ere a night and a day hath glided away
Our foes shall bite the dust ! ”

The armies are marching—the two great hosts—
Behold, they are sweeping past ;
The sound of their step on the echoing coasts
Was like a rushing blast.

They met when the western sun grew pale,
At twilight’s peaceful hour ;
When eve was spreading her soft grey veil
O’er hill, and field, and tower.

Sternly they gazed on each bright array,
By the moonbeams rising slow ;
Like men who felt that by break of day
They should stand as foe to foe.

How did the Saxons pass that night ?
In wassail and revelry ;
Reckless they drank till the pure moon sank,
And the sun rose from the sea.

How did the Normans pass that night ?

In fasting and in prayer ;

They kneel'd on the sod, and they cried to their God,

And their solemn hymns fill'd the air.

“ Mine arms, mine arms ! ” Duke William cried,

When he saw the first glimpse of dawn ;

“ Each moment is lost till my steed I bestride—

Sound ye the battle-horn.”

He buckled his cuirass blue and sheen,

And he brandish'd his sword so bright ;

In helmet and plume was there never seen

A fairer or statelier knight.

Proudly he strode from his milk-white tent,

And high on his steed did spring ;

Each man that saw him as he went

Said, “ Yonder rides a king ! ”

The battle was long, the battle was fierce;—

It is an awful sight

When keen swords strike, and when swift darts pierce,

From morn till dewy night.

Full many a gallant knight was slain,

And many a joyous steed ;

And blood was pour'd like summer rain,

Or the last eve's flowing mead.

The Saxons turn'd, the Saxons fled—

How could they choose but yield,

When they saw Earl Harold lying dead

Beside his useless shield ?

Now is Duke William England's king,

That great and mighty chief ;

The Normans are blithe as the merry spring,

But mute is the Saxons' grief.

Good news, good news to Normandie,

Where the fair Matilda mourns ;

'Twas a duke who left her to cross the sea,
But 'tis a king returns.

They rear'd an abbey where Harold fell,
A stately pile and fair ;
Through its still, grey walls the solemn bell
Oft summon'd to praise and prayer.

It is standing yet—a monument
Whose old and crumbling wall
To the gazer's eye is eloquent
Of Harold's fame and fall.

Reign of William Rufus, 1087—1100.

The New Forest.

THERE moves a sad procession
Across the silent vale,
With backward-glancing eyes of grief,
And tearful cheeks all pale.
Scatter'd and slow, without array,
With wavering feet they go,
Yet with a kind of solemn pace—
The measured tread of woe.

There women pause and tremble,
And weep with breaking heart ;
While men, with deeply knitted brows,
Stride mutely on apart.
There infants cling upon the breast,
Their own accustom'd place ;
And children gaze up askingly
Into each darken'd face.

For the king has sent his soldiers,
Who strike and pity not :
They have razed to the earth each smiling home,
They have burn'd each lowly cot.
It was the ruthless Conqueror
By whom this deed was done ;
And yet more fierce and hard of heart
Was Rufus, his stern son.
So they leave each humble cottage,
Where they so long have dwelt,
Where morn and eve to simple prayer,
With thankful hearts, they knelt—
Places all brighten'd with the joy
Of sweet domestic years,
And spots made holy by the flow
Of unforgotten tears.
And the gardens are uprooted,
And the walls cast down around ;
It is all a spacious wilderness—
The king's great hunting-ground !
While hopeless, homeless, shelterless,
Those exiles wander on ;
And most of them lie down to die,
Ere many days are gone.
O Forest ! green New Forest !
Home of the bird and breeze,
With all thy soft and sweeping glades,
And long dim aisles of trees ;
Like some ancestral palace,
Thou standest proud and fair,
Yet is each tree a monument
To Death and lone Despair !
And thou, relentless tyrant,
Ride forth and chase the deer,

With a heart that never melted yet
To pity or to fear.
But for all these broken spirits,
And for all these wasted homes,
God will avenge the fatherless—
The day of reckoning comes !
To hunt rode fierce King Rufus,
Upon a holy morn—
The Church had summon'd him to pray,
But he held the Church in scorn.
Sir Walter Tyrrel rode with him,
And drew his good bow-string ;
He drew the string to smite a deer,
But his arrow smote the king !
Hurl'd from his trembling charger,
The death-struck monarch lay ;
While fast, as flees the startled deer,
Rash Tyrrel fled away :
On the spot where his strong hand had made
So many desolate,
He died with none to pity him—
Such was the tyrant's fate !
None mourn'd for cruel Rufus :
With pomp they buried him ;
But no heart grieved beside his bier—
No kindly eye grew dim ;
But poor men lifted up their heads,
And clasp'd their hands, and said,
“ Thank God, the ruthless Conqueror
And his stern son are dead ! ”
Remember, oh, remember,
You who shudder at my lay,
These cruel men were children once,
As you are now were they :

They sported round a mother's seat,
 They pray'd beside her knee ;
 She gazed into their cloudless eyes,
 And ask'd, " What will they be ? "

Alas ! unhappy mothers,
 If ye could then have known
 How crime would make each soft young heart
 As cold and hard as stone,
 Ye would have wish'd them in their graves
 Ere life had pass'd its spring.
 Ah, friends, keep watch upon your hearts—
 Sin is a fearful thing.

Reign of Henry I., 1100—1135.

The Knighting of Count Geoffrey of Anjou.

OH, listen, ye dames and warriors all ;
 For never before or since
 Was there known so stately a festival
 As that which at Rouen did befall
 At the knighting of a prince.
 Count Geoffrey of Anjou was his name,
 And the race of our noblest kings—
 The great Plantagenets, whose fame
 Old England should ever be proud to claim—
 From this gallant chieftain springs.
 That name Count Geoffrey did first assume
 When, riding to the chase,
 He wore in his casque, instead of plume,
 A nodding crest of the yellow broom,
 In its fresh and fragrant grace.

The train it is moving with stately march
Through the vaulted abbey-gate ;
The lances are group'd beneath corbel and arch,
Like a forest dark of the slender larch,
So airy, and tall, and straight.

The bishop walk'd first in his mitre and gown,
A reverend prelate was he ;
With his bare silver tresses in place of a crown,
Next came great King Henry of learned renown,
From England beyond the sea.

There were heroes and chieftains undaunted in war,—
In peace gentle, generous, and true ;
With a step like a monarch, a glance like a star,
Came the Empress Matilda from Germany far,—
The betroth'd of the Count of Anjou.

As they paced up the aisle to the organ's slow strain,
Like unrolling a blazonried page,
The walls of the grey abbey echo'd again,
And its outspreading arches seem'd blessing the train
With the deep, quiet fervour of age.

The high mass is over, the aspirant kneels
At the feet of King Henry the wise ;
What strength and what hope in his spirit he feels,
As the vow of his knighthood he solemnly seals
With his lips, and his heart, and his eyes !

The monarch he lifted a Damascene blade
O'er the kneeling count's brow on high ;
A blow on his shoulder full gently he laid,
And by that little action a knight he is made,
Baptized into chivalry !

“ Bear thou this blow,” said the king to the knight,
“ But never bear blow again ;

For thy sword is to keep thine honour white,
And thine honour must keep thy good sword bright,
And both must be free from stain.

Thou takest a pledge upon thee now
To be loyal, and true, and brave,
Ever to succour the weak and low,
And to make the fierce oppressor bow,
And the helpless to aid and save.

Firm to thy God and thine honour's laws,
Remember this solemn word,
That the knight who ever his good sword draws
Save in a fair and a righteous cause
Is worthy to lose that sword.

Two cuisses of steel I give to thee,
Proof against blade and dart ;
Even so thy virtue proof should be
'Gainst the strokes of that ghostly enemy
Who wars upon the heart.

I give thee two spurs of gold so bright—
They are badges of chivalry ;
Thou must use them as becomes a knight,
Still to press onward in the fight,
And never to turn and flee.

I give thee a glorious steed from Spain—
Black as a starless night ;
As his docile neck obeys the rein,
Bend thou beneath thy lady's chain,
So binding, yet so slight.

I give thee a helm with a dancing crest ;
And like that airy plume,
The heart beneath thy steely vest
Should ever be lightsome in thy breast,
Unshadow'd by fortune's gloom.

Rise up a knight ! ” With a joyous spring
 Count Geoffrey leap'd on high ;
 His sword he clasp'd like a living thing,—
 “ For God, my lady, and my king ;
 Be this my battle-cry.”

Matilda's hand hath buckled his spurs—

A happy heart was his ;
 And surely a happy task was hers,
 For blest is the bride who ministers
 To her husband's fame and bliss.

Lightly he sprang on his best of steeds,
 Which stood at the abbey-door ;
 In his flashing eye each gazer reads
 A promise bright of valorous deeds,
 As he gallops fair Rouen o'er.

Blithely he rides in the people's sight,
 While the joyous heralds cry,
 “ God's blessing on Geoffrey the new-made knight—
 Long may he live, and well may he fight,
 And nobly at last may he die ! ”

Reign of Stephen, 1135—1154.

The Escape of the Empress Matilda.¹

THROUGH changeful clouds of night
 The winter moon was gliding,
 Like a bird with wings of light
 On the buoyant breezes riding ;

¹ The escape of Matilda took place as narrated in the ballad ; but the maiden who is there supposed to suggest the scheme is an imaginary personage.

Fair was the scene, and strangely wild,
 Beneath her wan transparent ray ;
For the snow, in glittering masses piled,
 Gave back a light that mock'd the day.
It lay in shining heaps,
 Like pearls of purest brightness ;
It clothed the woods and steeps
 In robes of bridal whiteness :
And high its crystal ramparts rose
 Along old Thames's alter'd shore ;
With one wide field of foam-like snows—
 The mighty stream was frozen o'er.
Where Oxford's stately towers
 Rise dark above the water,
She chides the mournful hours,
 Great Henry's queenly daughter ;
Her ears are fill'd with sounds of woe,
 Her eyes behold a sight of dread ;
Without, she sees the rebel foe—
 Within, the dying and the dead.
Full sadly spake the bands
 Of yielding on the morrow ;
Then wrung the queen her hands,
 Crying, in wrathful sorrow,
“ Ah, Gloucester ! ah, my brother dear !
 Thou truest and thou best of men !
'Twould not be thus if thou wert here—
 Right soon should I be rescued then ! ”
Down gazed those valiant lords,
 Their grief and shame were bitter ;
Alas, ungrateful words !
 Thy tears, O queen, were fitter ;
For true of heart and strong of hand,
 Each warrior fenced thee with his life ;

But when stern Famine bares her brand,
 Man can but perish in the strife!
 Out spake a maiden then :
 " Counsel my lady needeth ;
 When fails the wit of men,
 Oft woman's wit succeedeth.
 At Wallingford, Earl Robert bides,
 To guard thy son, thine England's heir :
 Can we not cross the frozen tides,
 To seek for aid and safety there ? "
 " Not so, alas ! not so !
 Long is the way, and dreary ;
 How shall we pass the foe—
 We, faint and worn and weary ? "
 " Doubt nothing," said that damsel bold ;
 " But only trust thyself to me,
 And thou shalt learn how fearless-soul'd
 An English maiden dares to be ! "
 " Farewell, ye noble hearts ;
 God take you to his keeping !
 Behold, your queen departs
 From friends so loyal, weeping ! "
 Matilda donn'd a milk-white vest ;
 And that same damsel, fair and true,
 In robes of stainless white was dress'd,
 Like the cold snow's unspotted hue.
 With linkèd cords they bound
 The empress and her maiden ;—
 O cords, be strong and sound,
 For dearly are ye laden !
 They lighted noiselessly and fair
 Upon the river's glassy bed ;
 The silence of the midnight air
 Received no echo from their tread.

They fled, like startled deer
 From the eager huntsman trooping,
 Beneath the ice-hills clear
 Full oft for shelter stooping.
 The watchmen gazed adown the stream,
 As they paced around the rebel-camp :
 " See, how the flying snow-flakes gleam
 Under the moon's resplendent lamp ! "

Six weary miles they fled,
 With fear and weakness striving,
 Their cheeks as white with dread
 As the snows against them driving.
 They paused awhile at Abington,
 While steeds were brought of fleetest power ;
 To Wallingford they hurried on,
 And reach'd it ere the dawn's first hour.

Her steed the empress check'd,
 Scarce could her limbs sustain her ;
 Little of that she reck'd,
 Nought now hath power to pain her.

Widely Earl Robert flings the gates,
 His sister and his queen to greet ;
 He leads her where Prince Henry waits,
 And, ah, their first embrace was sweet !

Matilda wept apart,
 Gentle and calm her weeping,
 Softening her haughty heart,
 Like dew the hard earth steeping.

Her young son in her arms she press'd :
 " With thee," she cried, " thou child most dear,
 And with my brother's generous breast
 To shield me, there is nought I fear.

Let honour due and fair
 To this my maid be given ;

Bless we with praise and prayer
The pitying God of heaven ;
His hand hath saved me from my foes,
His hand shall still my friends sustain ;
Thanks be to God ! I am with those
Who are my heart's beloved again !”

The English Merchant and the Saracen Lady.

LAY THE FIRST.

It was a merchant, a merchant of fame,
And he sail'd to the Holy Land ;
Gilbert à Becket was his name ;
And he went to trade with the Syrians rich
For velvets, and satins, and jewels, which
He might sell on the western strand.

But the luckless merchant was captive ta'en
By a Turcoman fierce and rude ;
They bound his limbs with a galling chain,
And they set him to labour, early and late,
In the gardens which lay round the palace-gate
Of the terrible chief Mahmoud.

It was there he met with a Saracen maid
Of virtue and beauty rare :
And, behold, our merchant forgot his trade ;
His English habits aside he flung,
And he learn'd to speak with a Saracen tongue,
For the sake of that damsel fair.

He taught Zarina the Christians' lore ;
And the hours sped swiftly by,
When together they trod the lonely shore,
And she listen'd to him with a willing ear,
And he gazed in her eyes so deep and clear,
By the light of the morning sky.

They plighted their faith, and they vow'd to wed,
If Gilbert should e'er be free ;
How could she doubt a word he said ?
For her heart was trustful, pure, and mild,
Like the heart of a young unfearing child,
And she loved him hopefully.

But days stole on, and months stole on,
And Gilbert was captive yet ;
A long, long year had come and gone,
When the maiden wander'd with earnest eye
To the shadowy walk 'neath the palm-trees high,
Where oft before they met.

"I am a Christian, my Gilbert, now,"
The Saracen lady said ;
The tone of her voice was sweet and low,
Like the voice of the night-breeze, cool and calm,
When it sighs through the leaves of the mur-
muring palm,
Of its own light sounds afraid.

"At eve and at morn to thy God I pray ;
Oh, why should I linger here ?
Let us flee to thine England, far away ;
The God we serve shall guide our bark
Over the desert of waters dark ;
For how can a Christian fear ?

I will send to thee at the hour of eve,
When the curtains are drawn o'er heaven ;
And I shall not weep for the friends I leave,

For I am an orphan, and ne'er have known
A gentle word or a kindly tone,
Save such as thou hast given.

My gems shall purchase a gallant boat,
And a crew of skilful men :
Oh, when on the fetterless waves we float,
With the wide blue sky and the wide blue sea
Stretching around us triumphantly,
Wilt thou not bless me then ?”

He kiss'd her hand, and he vow'd to come ;
And the night was calm and fair :
Oh, how the captive thought on home,
As he gazed the dashing waters o'er,
And noiselessly paced the rugged shore ;
But Zarina was not there !

He look'd to the east, he look'd to the west,
But her form he could not see ;
And fear struck cold upon his breast :
Ye glittering stars, so calm, so pale,
Say, have ye whisper'd the lover's tale
To some ruthless enemy ?

He look'd to the south, he look'd to the north,
A light, light step he hears !
And a figure steps from the shadows forth—
But, alas for Zarina, it is not she !
It is but her faithful nurse Safiè,
And her eyes are dim with tears.

“ Oh, listen,” she cried, in bitter woe,
“ Zarina is captive made !
Sir Christian, Sir Christian, alone must thou go ;
Thy way is still clear ; but they know that she
Was wont to wander at eve with thee,
By treacherous lips betray'd.

She bids thee flee to thine own fair land,
 For thou canst not aid her here."
 The old nurse pointed with her hand.
 Gilbert à Becket he grieved and sigh'd ;
 But he saw the bark on the white waves ride,
 And he thought on England dear.
 " Adieu, my lady," at last he said,
 While the nurse in silence wept ;
 " Oh, I ne'er will forget my Saracen maid,
 But I'll come to seek thee across the wave !"
 The words of the merchant's vow were brave—
 How shall that vow be kept ?
 Away flies the bark o'er the billowy foam,
 As though her sails were wings—
 She seems to know she is travelling home ;
 And at last good Gilbert à Becket stands
 On the noblest land of all earthly lands—
 Oh, how his glad heart springs !

LAY THE SECOND.

Where is Zarina ? A captive lone
 She sits, with tearful eye,
 Till two long years are come and gone ;
 And at last, when her ruthless gaolers slept,
 One eve of beauty, forth she crept
 To gaze from the lattice high.
 The wall was steep, yet she dared to leap—
 Safe on the turf doth she stand !
 'Tis pleasant to be on the green earth free ;
 Yet where shall the hapless maiden go,
 For the English tongue she doth not know,
 Though she seeks the English land ?

She hath wander'd down to the shore, and there
Is a bark about to sail,
With tapering masts that seem to bear,
Upon their crests so slight and high,
The outspread curtains of the sky,
Hung o'er with star-lamps pale.

Oft hath the maiden her lover heard,
When he spake of his far-off home :
Back to her lip returns the word,
And " London ! London ! " in haste she cries,
With a piteous tone and with streaming eyes,
While the seamen around her come.

" It is sad and strange," said the sailors then,
" That the damsel weepeth thus ;
But oh, let it never be said that men
Look'd on a woman in sore distress,
And gave no aid to her feebleness !
The maiden shall sail with us ! "

So they took her in ; and Zarina smiled,
And thank'd them with her eyes ;
Gentle she was as a chidden child ;
But the mariners could not understand
The wondrous words of the eastern land,
So they sail'd in silent wise.

They came to shore at fair Stamboul,
And the maiden roam'd all night
Through its streets so calm, and still, and cool ;
And to every passer-by that came
She murmur'd forth the one dear name,
Clasping her hands so white.

Some turn'd aside with careless pride,
And some with angry frown ;
With a curious ear some turn'd to hear ;

But the word she spake each passer knew,
For London is known the wide world through,
From England's fair renown.

From place to place did the maiden stray,
And still that little word
Was her only guide on her venturous way.
Full many a pitying stranger gave
Aid to her journey by land and wave,
When her low sweet voice was heard.

And oft at eve would Zarina stand
On the edge of the darkening flood,
And sing the lays of her own far land :
So sweet was her voice when she sang of home,
That the listening peasants would round her come,
Proffering their simple food.

Thus when full many a month had pass'd
Of wearisome wanderings long,
To the wish'd-for place she was borne at last ;
And the maiden gazed with bewilder'd eye
On each spreading roof and turret high,
'Mid London's hurrying throng.

Through all that maze of lane and street
With pleading looks she went ;
And still her weary voice was sweet :
But now was " Gilbert " the name she cried ;
The world of London is very wide,
And they knew not whom she meant.

Gilbert !—her lover's name—how oft
Had she breathed that sound before !
Her eye grew bright, her tone grew soft ;
For she thought that life and hope must dwell
In the precious name she loved so well ;
And her troubles all seem'd o'er.

Now Gilbert à Becket was dwelling there,
Like a merchant-prince was he ;
His gardens were wide, and his halls were fair ;
His servants flatter'd, his minstrels play'd ;—
He had almost forgotten his Saracen maid,
And their parting beyond the sea.

But word was brought, as he sate at meat,
Of a damsel fair and sad,
Who wander'd for ever through lane and street,
With claspèd hands and strength o'erspent,
Murmuring " Gilbert ! " as she went,
Like one possess'd, or mad.

Gilbert à Becket, he straightway rose,
For his conscience prick'd him sore ;
Forth from his splendid hall he goes—
A well-known voice is in his ears,
And he sees a fair face veil'd in tears,
And he thinks on the Syrian shore.

Forth to Zarina in haste he came,
Oh how could he ever forget ?
" Gilbert ! " she cries—'tis the self-same name,
But ah ! what a changed and joyous tone,
For the maiden's heart is no more alone,
And the lovers at last are met !

He took that happy wanderer home,
He placed her at his side ;
O'er desert plain, and o'er ocean's foam,
She hath come, with her changeless love and faith ;
And now there is nothing can part, save death,
The bridegroom and the bride !

The maiden was led to the holy font,
They named her " Matilda " there ;
Yet ever was Gilbert à Becket wont,

In his joyous home, with a sweet wife blest,
 To say that he loved Zarina best,
 His Saracen true and fair.

Their first-born son was a priest of power,
 Who ruled on English ground—

His fame remaineth to this hour!

God send to every valiant knight
 A lady as true, and a home as bright,
 As Gilbert the merchant found!

Reign of Henry II., 1154—1189.

Earl Strongbow.

EARL STRONGBOW lies in Dublin towers,
 Begirt by a mighty host ;
 At the horn's wild sound they have gather'd around
 From forest, hill, and coast.
 There are thirty thousand island men,
 With spears, and bows, and darts ;
 Earl Strongbow has not one to ten—
 Six hundred gallant hearts !
 Six hundred gallant hearts had he,
 And not a blade beside ;
 But these did battle valorously
 For Strongbow and his bride.
 Fair Eva wept, fair Eva pray'd,
 And wrung her hands of snow ;
 Alas, her tears are little aid
 Against the ruthless foe !

The brave earl sate at his castle-board
At the close of a summer's day ;
Freely the generous wine was pour'd
As they feasted the eve away ;
He gazed on the manly brows around—
Cried he, " We may yet hold out,
For our walls so strong will shield us long,
And our hearts are full as stout !"
They answer'd his words by a ringing cheer,
And Milo de Cogan spoke ;
" We lack but bold Fitzstephen here,
With his hand and heart of oak ;
In Carrig fair Fitzstephen rests ;
But knew he of our need,
Soon should we see his courser free
Come leaping o'er the mead."
As he spake, a page came up the hall,
Like a ghost of the drown'd his seeming ;
Pale was his face and feeble his pace,
And his vest all drench'd and streaming.
" Lord baron," he cried, " unseen did I glide
Through the midst of yon mighty foe,
Thy moat did I swim, as the twilight sank dim,
And I bear thee news of woe !
Be sad, be sad ! thou hast look'd thy last
On the bold Fitzstephen's brow ;
His knightly limbs ere morn be past
Shall feed the hooded crow :
Beset by a force of fearful strength,
By want and famine worn,
His gallant heart gives way at length,
And he must yield ere morn.
He sends thee this glove of steel by me ;
And he bade me pray ye all

To give a mass to his memory,
And a sigh to grace his fall.”
Sadly the token Earl Strongbow took,
While sorrow, shame, and ire
Strove for a while in his downcast look ;
But anon his eyes shot fire !
“ Answer me, friends,” he cried ; “ if thus
Our danger and need were known,
Would not Fitzstephen die for us ?
And now shall he fall alone ? ”
Up leap’d they all at those stirring words,
And they shook the ancient hall
When the angry clash of their outdrawn swords,
And their shouts, “ We are ready all ! ”
Ready were all—ah, noble few,
Ready ye were to die !
That heart is chill which feels no thrill
At your fidelity !
One swift embrace exchanging then,
Like friends who part ere death,
They rush on the foe, as the mountain-piled snow
Rushes down on the plains beneath !
Ah, knew’st thou, Eva, good and fair,
Kneeling with lifted hands,
How he whose name thou breath’st in prayer
By death beleaguer’d stands,
Paler would grow thy cheeks’ soft glow,
Sadder thine eyes’ soft light,
But prouder still thy trembling heart,
To be wife to so true a knight !
Come forth, come forth from thy lonely bower,
A messenger rides below ;
“ Oh, bring’st thou news from Dublin’s tower ?
Speak, is it weal or woe ? ”

“ Joy, lady, joy—these wond’ring eyes
Have look’d on deeds of fame ;
Joy—for the earth, the sea, the skies,
Ring with Earl Pembroke’s name !
That tiny band, I saw it dash
Through the enemy’s gather’d crowd,
It was like the slender lightning’s flash
Cleaving the massy cloud.
Clear shot they through—on either hand
Their foes nor fight nor fly,
But stand, as trembling sheep might stand
When a lion hath darted by !
And when they came to Carrig fair,
Trembling their eyes beheld
Its lonely banners rock the air,
Its heights unsentinell’d ;
Its troops, a sad and downcast host,
Slow moving to the gate,
Leaving their leader at his post,
Death’s welcome stroke to wait !
‘ To the rescue, ho ! ’ they charge the foe
With a torrent’s headlong might ;
With answering shout the troops rush out
And join that desperate fight.
Oh, who shall say what Fitzstephen felt
When, from his tower on high,
He saw the light of their lances bright
Gleaming against the sky ?
Oh, who shall say what Fitzstephen felt
When the glorious fight was done,
And his friend he prest to his fervent breast,
As a mother clasps her son ! ”
Fair Eva kneel’d on the flowery mead,
But never a word she spoke ;

When hark ! the tramp of a coming steed
That joyful silence broke.

In glistening steel, with armèd heel,
And tall plume stooping low,
With pennon fair, that woos the air,
A warrior nears them now ;
His step is light, and his smile is bright,
As he flings down his charger's rein :
Oh ! this is Pembroke's graceful knight—
He is come to his own again !

“ Now, welcome home, mine honour'd lord !
Proud should old England be
To learn from thy resistless sword
Pure faith and chivalry !
Oh, I have wept from sun to sun,
A sad and widow'd wife ;
But I would not wish thy deed undone,
Though it had cost thy life ! ”

Reign of Richard the First, 1189—1199.

The Captivity of Cœur de Lion.

IN THREE LAYS.

LAY THE FIRST.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE KING.

IN the realm of sunny Palestine,
Realm of the rose, the palm, the vine,
The warrior-king hath fought ;

And the valour of his strong right hand
Free passage through that hallow'd land
For Christian men hath wrought.

Now may the pilgrim fearless tread
The spot that held his Saviour dead,
And fearless kneel to pay
His vows before that sacred shrine,
In the land of sunny Palestine,
Where Christians love to pray.

And the warrior-king hath won him fame,
A mighty and a glorious name
Is his, the wide world through ;
For his deeds on that far eastern shore,
Done in a righteous cause, seem more
Than man alone might do.

A generous knight he was, who strove
For fame, and piety, and love,
Not for base earthly gain :
He saw his comrades share the spoil
Won by his valour and his toil,
With careless, calm disdain.

Enough it was for him to feel
That for his God he drew his steel,
And for his faith was bold ;
And he thought one smile so gently bright,
Given by his lady to her knight,
Was worth a world of gold.

And he knew that he should leave behind
The legacy to all mankind
Of an undying name ;
A name to thrill the brave, and make
The very coward's heart awake
To not ignoble shame.

And now, his toils and dangers o'er,
 Joyous he quits that eastern shore ;
 Oh, let him journey fast !
 For his eager heart with hope doth beat,
 He pants once more to set his feet
 On England's soil at last.

Yet are there foes upon his way
 To strike, beleaguer, and waylay ;—
 The promise-breaking Greek,
 The lord of France's lovely land,
 And Austria's duke, as strong of hand
 As he of wit is weak.

In a Templar's garb the king is drest,
 The white cross gleams upon his breast ;
 Safe in this strange disguise
 He hopes to join his lady dear,
 And read his welcome in the tear
 That bathes her gentle eyes.

Look forth, look forth from England's shore !
 Look forth, look forth, the far seas o'er !
 When will his swift bark come ?
 Oh, swift and sure the bark should be
 Which bears across the willing sea
 Our wanderer to his home !

Take up, take up the strain of grief !
 Lost is our warrior and our chief !
 Foes lurk'd upon his path :
 Nor close disguise, nor linkèd mail,
 Nor faith, nor chivalry avail
 To save him from their wrath.

Captive he is ; but to what foe,
 Alas, his English do not know !
 A dark and sunless gloom

Hath closed above that noble head,
 As closeth o'er the newly dead
 The cold and changeless tomb!

LAY THE SECOND.

THE COMPLAINT OF CŒUR DE LION IN HIS CAPTIVITY.

I was a king of fearless might,
 I was a warrior and a knight;
 My soul was like the morning light,
 So sparkling in its buoyancy!

I am a captive sad and lone,
 And all my glorious things are gone,
 Except the heart that is mine own,
 Unchanging in its royalty!

The crown that I was wont to wear,
 The robe of pride, the sceptre fair,—
 These are not mine, though mine they were,—
 Gone are the signs of majesty!

The sword that I was wont to wield,
 The dancing plume, the knightly shield,
 The clarion calling to the field,
 Are lost to my captivity!

Oh that I were a simple hind,
 Slavish in toil, and weak in mind,
 So I might feel the morning wind
 Sweep o'er my forehead joyously!

The rills along my native plains
 Are murmuring forth their gladsome strains;
 And the gay breeze that scorneth chains
 Is blowing fresh and wantonly!

The birds that skim my native air
 Are pouring forth sweet music there ;
 The woods are green, the hills are fair,
 While I am in captivity !

My strength is worn, my spirits sink,
 My heart does everything but shrink ;
 Alas, my people, do ye think
 Upon your king regretfully ?

My queen,¹ my wife, my lady ! thou
 Of the blue eye and dazzling brow,
 Say, art thou weeping for me now,
 In sad and patient constancy ?

Do ye remember me ? Oh, fast
 The weary months are gliding past :
 Will they bring liberty at last ?
 Or have ye all forgotten me ?

Ah, friends ! if ye were thus distress'd,
 Thus chain'd, insulted, and oppress'd,
 Ye would not find this faithful breast
 So careless of your memory !

Ah, lady ! did a tear but steep
 Those moonlight eyes, so still and deep,
 Here is a heart, ere thou shouldst weep,
 That would rejoice to die for thee !

Hard is the lesson I must learn,
 How changeless faith meets false return ;
 The love I give I cannot earn
 As strong in its fidelity !

My God, for Thee my sword I drew ;
 Thy foes my strong arm overthrew ;
 Oh, do not Thou forget me too ;
 Give aid in mine extremity !

¹ Berengaria of Navarre, a princess of great beauty and gentleness.

Upon Thy love my heart shall lean
 Even in my dungeon's gloomy scene ;
 Forgotten by my friends, my queen,
 In Thee I find sufficiency !

LAY THE THIRD.

THE LAMENT OF THE ENGLISH FOR THE CAPTIVITY OF CŒUR DE LION.

We have lost our hero-monarch, our lion-king is ta'en,
 Around his free and knightly limbs is bound the shame-
 ful chain ;

The eye which used to marshal us is waxing faint and
 dim,

For the light of day, which shines on us, is shut and
 barr'd from him.

Alas, alas, for England ! our princely chief is lost ;
 And powerless is the mighty arm that hath struck down
 a host ;

Our people hath no ruler, no tenant hath our throne ;
 And we know not where the enemy hath laid our
 glorious one.

We have followed him to battle in the far-off eastern
 climes ;

We have watch'd his matchless valour a thousand,
 thousand times ;

We have seen the humbled Saracen kneel low to kiss
 his robe ;

For his fame hath but one limit—the limit of the globe !

For his coronal of glory he won the brightest gem
 Where the stately palms are circling thy land, Jeru-
 salem !

The very air that fans thy domes is vocal with his name,
 And the pale cheek of each infidel pays tribute to his
 fame.

His eye was like the lightning, his arm was like its
 stroke,
 When it shivers into shapeless dust the gnarl'd and
 massy oak ;
 His voice was like a trumpet with a challenge in its tone,
 Yet sweet as the wild lark that sings in field and forest
 lone.

But now there is a fetter on that firm and noble hand,
 And mute is that imperial voice whose accent was com-
 mand ;
 That eye of bright authority is waxing faint and dim,
 For the beams of day, the breath of morn—all, all are
 barr'd from him !

Oh, is it wily Philip who have wrought thee this mis-
 chance,
 Because thine English banner did outstrip the flag of
 France ?
 Or is it specious Burgundy, that soft and carpet-knight,
 Because thy foot hath ever been before him in the fight ?
 Or is it craven Austria, who plann'd the false surprise,
 In vengeance for the lofty scorn of thine undaunted
 eyes ?
 Well hath thy soul disdain'd him, and well thine eye
 hath spurn'd
 The cunning envy of the base, which in his spirit burn'd.
 Out on thee, recreant Austria ! in battle thou wouldst be
 Full glad to sue for mercy to the Lion on thy knee ;
 Thou art not meet to serve him as a squire or as a slave ;
 Alas, that craft and dastardy prevail against the brave !
 We have sheath'd our useless weapons, we have flung
 our helmets down,
 Our steeds are uncaparison'd, our clarions are unblown ;

Why should the glorious clarion sound, to cheer us on
the foe?
Thou art not here to marshal us, so wherefore should
we go?
All powerless are thy warriors—they know not where
thou art;
They can but lock thy bitter wrongs within each burn-
ing heart;
For thee the minstrel only his lay of mourning sings,
Thou monarch of all heroes! thou hero among kings!

Cœur de Lion and his Horse.

“ АН, Fanuel, my noble horse, thou bleedest—thou art
slain!
Thou wilt never bear me to the chase or the battle-field
again!
Thou wert a steed of peerless might, a steed of strength
and glee;
Right faithful wert thou to thy lord, and well thy lord
loved thee.
Thou wouldst answer, when I named thee, with a joyous
neigh and proud,
For thy voice was like a cymbal's, so exulting and so
loud;
Thou wouldst arch thy neck, and stamp thy foot, for
joy when I came near;
Thou wert eager to look lovely in the eyes of one so
dear.
If other knight dared ride thee, with gay and reckless
bound,
As a billow shakes the foam away, thou'dst toss him to
the ground:

Yet gentle wert thou in thy strength ; my lady-love
might dare
To twine her fingers in thy mane, as in a child's bright
hair.

Thou didst not start nor tremble at the sound of clash-
ing swords ;
Thy spirit in the battle was as eager as thy lord's ;
Like him, thy fittest place was where the closing lines
engage,
When thou wouldst snort and shake thy mane, like a
lion in his rage.

A friend and a companion thou wert unto my heart ;
Alas, alas, my noble steed, and is it thus we part ?
Low on the ground, and lifeless, I see thy graceful head ;
My voice awakes thee not,—by this I know that thou
art dead.

I must leave thee on the burning sands, beneath the
eastern sun,
Like a worn and sleeping warrior whose battle-task is
done ;
Yet thou shalt not be forgotten by thy master and thy
friend ;
Where'er my name is known on earth, thy glory shall
extend."

King Richard thus lamented for his steed when it was
slain ;
But he turn'd him to the combat, and he drew his
sword again ;
"Take back thy barb, good Longsword ;¹ mount, mount,
and be thou mute ;
For I will not fight on horseback, if thou must fight a-
foot."

¹ William, Earl of Salisbury, surnamed Longsword.

But the mighty sultan Saladin had watch'd our gallant
king,

How he bore him in the battle like an eagle on the wing ;
He saw his charger bleeding ; he saw the hero fight
On foot amid his followers, a fearless-hearted knight.

He bade a coal-black steed be brought, and to his page
he spake,

“ Lead this to yonder chieftain—bid him ride it for my
sake :

Fair courtesy beseemeth the lofty in degree ;
And to honour such a hero, doth honour unto me.”

The page he bow'd full lowly, that courser's rein he took,
And he led him where King Richard had kneel'd beside
a brook ;

All heated with the battle, he had cast his helm aside,
And he stoop'd to bathe his forehead in the cold and
glassy tide.

“ O king, the mighty Saladin hath sent this steed to
thee ; ”

Thus spake the page full humbly, and dropp'd upon his
knee.

King Richard smooth'd that charger's mane, and stroked
his graceful head ;

“ Go thank your courteous master,” right graciously he
said.

“ Much shall I prize thee for his sake, my steed of glossy
black ! ”

With that he grasp'd the courser's mane, to leap upon
his back :

But Longsword came to check him, that brave and loyal
count ;

“ Nay, nay, my liege—your pardon—let me try him ere
you mount.”

“ Who doubts the noble sultan’s faith ? ” King Richard
sternly said ;

But the earl was in the saddle ere the answer well was
made :

Oh, fair and knightly was his seat upon the gilded selle ;
And he prick’d the charger’s side, resolved to try his
mettle well.

The Arab feels a stranger’s spur, a stranger’s hand he
knows ;

Down to the dust right scornfully he bends his haughty
brows ;

Then tossing up his wrathful head, he scour’d across
the plain,

Like the wild bull of the jungle, in his fury and disdain.

Away, away, with frantic speed, across the flying sand,
He rushes like a torrent freed, uncheck’d by human
hand ;

Nor did he stay his headlong race until his path had
crossed,

Like a flash of summer lightning, the Paynim’s startled
host.

He came to where the sultan stood, his ancient master
dear

And there he paused ; and sweet it was his joyous neigh
to hear ;

He laid his head right lovingly against the sultan’s
breast,

With wistful and expectant eyes that ask’d to be caress’d.

Oh, deeply blush’d brave Saladin ! he blush’d for noble
shame,

Lest the stain of such a stratagem should light upon his
fame ;

He bent full low his turban'd brow, and scarce his eyes
 could lift,
 As he craved of good Earl William a pardon for his
 gift.

“Now grieve not, gallant sultan,” quoth the earl in
 earnest tone ;

“For the great heart of King Richard is noble as thine
 own :

No doubt is in his confidence ; as soon would he believe
 That *he* could be dishonour'd, as that *thou* couldst thus
 deceive.”

Of joyous heart was Saladin that thus the earl should say,
 He bade his slaves caparison a steed of silver-grey ;
 And with many a phrase of courtesy, and many a fair
 excuse,

He sent that docile charger for good King Richard's use.
 To that steed, in fair remembrance of the sultan true
 and brave,

The stately name of Saladin our gallant monarch gave.
 Thus to his foe each warrior-king was courteous as a
 brother :

Oh, thus should generous enemies do honour to each
 other !

Reign of King John, 1199—1216.

The Bay of the fearless De Courcy.

THE fame of the fearless de Courcy
 Is boundless as the air ;
 With his own right hand he won the land
 Of Ulster, green and fair !

But he lieth low in a dungeon now,
 Powerless, in proud despair ;
 For false King John hath cast him in,
 And closely chain'd him there.

The noble knight was weary
 At morn, and eve, and noon ;
 For chilly bright seem'd dawn's soft light,
 And coldly shone the moon :
 No gleaming mail gave back the rays
 Of the dim unfriendly sky,
 And the proud free stars disdain'd to gaze
 Through his lattice, barr'd and high.

But when the trumpet-note of war
 Rang through his narrow room,
 Telling of banners streaming far,
 Of knight, and steed, and plume ;
 Of the wild *mélée*, and the sabre's clash,
 How would his spirit bound !
 Yet ever after the lightning's flash
 Night closeth darker round.

Down would he sink on the floor again,
 Like the pilgrim who sinks on some desert plain,
 Even while his thirsting ear can trace
 The hum of distant streams ;
 Or the maimèd hound, who hears the chase
 Sweep past him in his dreams.

The false king sate in his hall of state
 'Mid knights and nobles free ;
 " Who is there," he cried, " who will cross the tide,
 And do battle in France for me ?
 There is cast on mine honour a fearful stain,
 The death of the boy who ruled Bretagne ;¹
 And the monarch of France, my suzerain,

¹ Prince Arthur of Brittany, whose melancholy fate has been too often the theme of song and story to require notice here.

Hath bidden a champion for me appear,
 My fame from this dark'ning blot to clear.
 Speak—is your silence the silence of fear,
 My knights and my nobles? Frowning and pale
 Your faces grow as I tell my tale!
 Is there not one of this knightly ring
 Who dares do battle for his king?"

The warriors they heard, but they spake not a word;
 The earth some gazed upon,
 And some did raise a steadfast gaze
 To the face of false King John.
 Think ye they fear'd? They were Englishmen all,
 Though mutely they stood in their monarch's hall;
 The heroes of many a well-fought day,
 Who loved the sound of a gathering fray,
 Even as the lonely shepherd loves
 The herd's soft bell in the mountain-groves.
 Why were they silent? There was not one
 Who could trust the word of false King John;
 And their cheeks grew pallid as they thought
 On the deed of blood by his base hand wrought;
 Pale, with a brave heart's generous fear,
 When forced a tale of shame to hear.

'Twas a coward whiteness then did chase
 The glow of shame from the false king's face;
 And he turn'd aside, in bootless pride,
 That witness of his guilt to hide;
 Yet every heart around him there
 Witness against him more strongly bare!

Oh, out then spake the beauteous queen:¹

“A captive lord I know,

¹ Isabella of Angoulême, wife to King John, celebrated for her beauty and high spirit.

Whose loyal heart hath ever been
 Eager to meet the foe ;
 Were true De Courcy here this day,
 Freed from his galling chain,
 Never, oh never, should scoffers say,
 That, amid all England's rank and might,
 Their king had sought him a loyal knight,
 And sought such knight in vain !”
 Up started the monarch, and clear'd his brow,
 And bade them summon De Courcy now.
 Swiftly his messengers hasted away,
 And sought the cell where the hero lay ;
 They bade him arise at his master's call,
 And follow their steps to the stately hall.

He is brought before the council,—
 There are chains upon his hands ;
 With his silver hair, that aged knight,
 Like a rock o'erhung with foam-clouds white,
 Proudly and calmly stands.
 He gazes on the monarch
 With a stern and starlike eye ;
 And the company muse and marvel much,
 That the light of the old man's eye is such,
 After long captivity.
 His fetters hang upon him
 Like an unheeded thing ;
 Or like a robe of purple, worn
 With graceful and indifferent scorn
 By some great-hearted king.
 And strange it was to witness
 How the false king look'd aside ;
 For he dared not meet his captive eye !
 Thus ever the spirit's royalty
 Is greater than pomp and pride !

The false king spake to his squires around,
 And his lifted voice had an angry sound ;
 " Strike ye the chains from each knightly limb !
 Who was so bold as to fetter him ?
 Warrior, believe me, no hest of mine
 Bade them fetter a form like thine ;
 Thy sovereign knoweth thy fame too well."
 He paused, and a cloud on his dark brow fell ;
 For the knight still gazed upon him,
 And his eye was like a star ;
 And the words on the lips of the false king died,
 Like the murmuring sounds of an ebbing tide
 By the traveller heard afar.

From the warrior's form they loosed the chain ;
 His face was lighted with calm disdain ;
 Nor cheek, nor lip, nor eye, gave token
 Even that he knew his chains were broken.
 He spake—no music, loud or clear,
 Was in the voice of the grey-hair'd knight ;
 But a low stern sound, like that ye hear
 In the march of a mail-clad host by night.
 " Brother of Cœur de Lion," said he,
 " These chains have not dishonour'd me !"
 There was crushing scorn in each simple word,
 Mightier than battle-axe or sword.

Not long did the heart of the false king thrill
 To the touch of passing shame,
 For it was hard, and mean, and chill ;
 As breezes sweep o'er a frozen rill,
 Leaving it cold and unbroken still,—
 That feeling went and came ;
 And now to the knight he made reply,
 Pleading his cause right craftily ;
 Skill'd was his tongue in specious use

Of promise fair and of feign'd excuse,
 Blended with words of strong appeal
 To love of fame and to loyal zeal.

At length he ceased ; and every eye
 Gazed on De Courcy wistfully.

“ Speak ! ” cried the king in that fearful pause ;
 “ Wilt thou not champion thy monarch's cause ? ”

The old knight struck his foot on the ground,
 Like a war-horse hearing the trumpet sound ;
 And he spake with a voice of thunder,

Solemn and fierce in tone,

Waving his hand to the stately band

Who stood by the monarch's throne,
 As a warrior might wave his flashing glaive

When cheering his squadrons on ;

“ I will fight for the honour of England,
 Though not for false King John ! ”

He turn'd and strode from the lofty hall,

Nor seem'd to hear the sudden cheer

Which burst, as he spake, from the lips of all.

And when he stood in the air without,

He paused as if in joyful doubt ;

To the forests green and the wide blue sky

Stretching his arms embracingly,

With stately tread and uplifted head,

As a good steed tosses back his mane

When they loose his neck from the servile rein :

Ye know not, ye who are always free,

How precious a thing is liberty !

“ O world ! ” he cried ; “ sky, river, hill !

Ye wear the garments of beauty still ;

How have ye kept your youth so fair,¹

While age has whiten'd this hoary hair ? ”

¹ The reader of German will here recognize an exquisite stanza from Uhland, very inadequately rendered.

But when the squire, who watch'd his lord,
Gave to his hand his ancient sword,
The hilt he press'd to his eager breast,
Like one who a long-lost friend hath met ;
And joyously said, as he kiss'd the blade,
“ Methinks there is youth in my spirit yet.
For France ! for France ! o'er the waters blue ;
False king, dear land, adieu, adieu ! ”
He hath cross'd the booming ocean,
On the shore he plants his lance ;
And he sends his daring challenge
Into the heart of France :
“ Lo, here I stand for England,
Queen of the silver main !
To guard her fame and to cleanse her name
From slander's darkening stain !
Advance, advance ! ye knights of France ;
Give answer to my call !
Lo, here I stand for England !
And I defy ye all ! ”

From the east and the north came champions forth—
They came in a knightly crowd ;
From the south and the west each generous breast
Throbb'd at that summons proud.
But though brave was each lord, and keen each sword,
No warrior could withstand
The strength of the hero-spirit
Which nerved that old man's hand.
He is conqueror in the battle ;
He hath won the wreath of bay ;
To the shining crown of his fair renown
He hath added another ray :
He hath drawn his sword for England ;
He hath fought for her spotless name ;

And the isle resounds to her farthest bounds
 With her grey-hair'd hero's fame.
 In the ears of the craven monarch
 Oft must this burthen ring,—
 "Though the crown be thine and the royal line,
 He is in heart thy king!"
 So they gave this graceful honour
 To the bold De Courcy's race,
 That they ever should dare their helmets to wear
 Before the king's own face:
 And the sons of that line of heroes
 To this day their right assume;
 For, when every head is unbonneted,¹
 They walk in cap and plume!

The Lament of Eleanor of Bretagne.

[Eleanor was so beautiful that she was called "The Pearl of Brittany." She was the sister of Prince Arthur; and after the murder of her brother she was imprisoned in Bristol Castle by the cruel and tyrannical John, where she died after a captivity of many years.]

"COMFORT me, O my God!
 Mine only hope Thou art!
 The strokes of Thine afflicting rod
 Fall heavy on my heart.
 Oh, who would wish to live
 When life's bright flowers decay!
 Oh, had I power to give
 This weight of life away!
 Comfort me, O my God!

¹ The present representative of the house of De Courcy is Lord Kinsale.

Thou didst Thyself endure
 Full many a bitter pang ;
 Thou, the All-holy, the All-pure,
 Upon the cross didst hang.
 My feet are on the track
 Trodden erewhile by Thine ;—
 Ah, do not cast me back
 On this weak heart of mine !
 Comfort me, O my God !

I will pour forth my woes
 Into Thy pitying ear.
 Stern, stern must be the hearts of those
 Whose hands confined me here ;
 In the morning of my days,
 In the spring of guiltless mirth,
 Never again to gaze
 Free on the gladsome earth !
 Comfort me, O my God !

'Twas said that I was fair
 As the white gem of the sea ;
 They named me, in my native air,
 The Pearl of Brittany :
 At tourneys have I been,
 And they chose me, far and near,
 To reign the tourney's queen,—
 I, the poor captive here.
 Comfort me, O my God !

But I do not now regret
 My splendour, doom'd to fade ;
 My changing beauty I forget ;—
 But oh, the wood's deep shade,
 The free bird's gushing songs,
 The sound of murmuring seas,—

For these my spirit longs,
 And for dearer things than these.
 Comfort me, O my God!

I had a brother then,
 Whose place was in my heart;—
 Oh, give me my beloved again,
 And freedom may depart!
 How shall I breathe the tone
 Of that name,—the lost—the dear?
 Arthur! mine own, mine own!—
 Alas, thou canst not hear!
 Comfort me, O my God!

They murder'd him by night,
 In the sweetness of his youth,
 His brow all bright with boyhood's light,
 Clear as the beams of truth.
 Falaise, thy walls, Falaise,
 Behold a fearful thing,
 For his brother's child a brother slays,
 And a traitor stabs his king!
 Comfort me, O my God!

Yes, king thou shouldst have been
 Of this isle of high renown;
 But death's wide gulf is now between
 Thee and thy thorny crown.
 My brother! thou wert mine!
 Of crowns I little reck;
 But, oh, that I could twine
 These arms about thy neck!
 Comfort me, O my God!

Sleep on, sweet Arthur, sleep
 In thy calm and happy grave;
 How couldst thou bear to see me weep,
 And not have power to save?

Farewell! And shall I waste
 My weary life away
 In weeping for the psst?
 No! let me kneel and pray.
 Comfort me, O my God!
 That wailing voice hath ceased,
 It melted into tears;
 And death's sure hand the maid released,
 After long mournful years.
 In her beauty and her bloom
 She was borne to that dark hold;
 Thence was she carried to her tomb,
 Grey-hair'd, and wan, and old!

Reign of Henry III., 1216—1272.

The Prince and the Outlaw.

OH, it was our gallant Prince Edward
 Rode forth into Alton wood;
 His plume was white, his sword was bright,
 His heart was brave and good;
 He saw the sunlight through the trees,
 Checkering the grassy earth;
 He felt the breath of the summer breeze,
 And his spirit was full of mirth.
 It was there he met with a stranger knight;
 Full haughty was his face,
 His eye spoke scorn, though his mail was worn,
 And stately was his pace.
 "Now who art thou, of the darksome brow,
 Who wanderest here so free?"

“ Oh, I’m one that will walk the wild green woods,
And never ask leave of thee.”

“ How now, thou churl ? ” quoth the angry prince,
“ Ask pardon on thy knee !

I am England’s heir, of my wrath beware,
Or ill shall it fare with thee.”

“ Art thou England’s heir ? ” quoth the outlaw bold ;
“ Well, if thy words be true,

I see not why such a knight as I
Should fear for such as you.

I am Adam de Gordon, a noble free ;
Perchance thou hast heard my name.”

“ I have heard it, I trow (quoth the prince), and thou
Art a traitor of blackest fame.

Yield thee to me ! ” But the outlaw cried,

“ Now, if thou knowest not fear,
Out with thy sword ! by a good knight’s word,
I will give thee battle here.”

“ Come on ! ” cried that prince of dauntless heart ;

“ Yet pause while I alight,
For I never will play the craven’s part,
At odds with thee to fight.”

He sprang from his steed, he drew his blade,
And a terrible fray began,

The very first stroke that Prince Edward made,
Blood from the Gordon ran.

At the second stroke that Prince Edward made,
The Gordon fell on his knee ;

But he did not kneel to cry for aid—
Of a loftier heart was he.

To his feet he sprang, and the angry clang
Of their flashing swords did sound

Far through the green and solemn woods
Stretching in beauty round.

The Gordon is pale, and his strength doth fail,
And his blood is ebbing fast,
But the spirit so high, in his flashing eye,
Is dauntless to the last.
He hath struck the prince on his mailèd breast,
But the prince laugh'd scornfully ;
“ Oh, was it the wood-breeze stirr'd my vest,
Or a leaf from yonder tree ? ”

There is bitter grief in the Gordon's eye,
For he feels his strength depart ;
It is not that he fears to die—
To be conquer'd grieves his heart ;
He sinks, like a gallant ship o'erthrown
By the blast and the driving surf ;
“ I yield me *not!* ” is his last faint tone,
As he falls on the trampled turf.

The prince was proud as a reinless steed—
Pride is an evil thing—
But the heart he bore was a heart indeed,
Right worthy of a king :
He sheath'd his blade, he sprang to aid
The Gordon as he lay ;
“ Rise up,” cried he, “ my valorous foe,
Thou hast borne thee well to-day.”

He kneel'd by his side, he stanch'd the tide
Of life-blood flowing free ;
With his scarf he bound each gaping wound
Softly and tenderly :
He lifted the Gordon on his steed,
Himself he held the rein :
“ I hold thee,” he said, “ for a knight indeed,
And I give thee thy life again.”

There was bitter grief in the Gordon's eye ;
He fears not chains nor death,

But he weeps for broken loyalty
And for forgotten faith.

Humbly he bent his knightly head

With a changed and gentle brow :

“ Oh, pardon ! I yield, I yield ! ” he said ;

“ I am truly conquer'd now.”

Behold how mercy softeneth still

The haughtiest heart that beats ;

Pride with disdain may be answer'd again,

But pardon at once defeats.

The brave man felt forgiveness melt

A heart by fear unshaken ;

He was ready to die for his loyalty

To the prince he had forsaken.

Prince Edward hath brought him to Guilford Tower

Ere that summer's day is o'er ;

He hath led him in to the secret bower

Of his fair wife Alianore ;¹

His mother, the lady of gay Provence,²

And his sire, the king, were there :

Oh, scarcely the Gordon dared advance

In a presence so stately and fair.

But the prince hath kneel'd at his father's feet,—

For the Gordon's life he sues ;

His lady so fair, she join'd his prayer ;

And how should the king refuse ?

Can he his own dear son withstand,

So duteous, brave, and true ;

And the loveliest lady in all the land

Kneeling before him too ?

“ My children, arise ! ” the old king said,

And a tear was in his eye ;

¹ Alianore, or Eleonora, princess of Castile.

² Eleanor of Provence, wife to King Henry the Third.

He laid his hand on each bright young head,
And he bless'd them fervently.

“ With a joyful heart I grant your prayer,
And I bid the Gordon live ;

Oh, the happiest part of a monarch's care
Is to pity and forgive.”

Then spake the queen so fair and free,—

“ The Gordon I will make

Steward of my royal house,” quoth she,

“ For these dear children's sake.”

May every prince be as generous

(Be this our prayer to Heaven) ;

And may every gallant rebel thus

Repent and be forgiven.

Reign of Edward I., 1272—1307.

The Death of King Henry the Third.

At Sicily's court Prince Edward sate,

Of a joyous heart was he,

For he came from afar from the holy war,

From battle and victory.

There strode a messenger into the hall,

He kneel'd upon his knee ;

“ What news dost thou bring,” quoth Sicily's king,

“ From the fair isle of the sea ? ”

“ I come to Prince Edward,” the messenger cried,

“ And with heavy news I come ;

For at eventide his young son died—

He died in his English home ! ”

Fair Elinore wrings her lily hands
In a mother's bitter woe ;
But firm and grave Prince Edward stands,
Like a knight who meets his foe.

“ Take comfort, Alianore, my wife,
Submit thee to this pain ;
For it is but the God who giveth life
Recalling His gift again.”

Oh, not the less fair Elinore weeps,
Her lips can speak no word ;
But her dark eyes raise their tearful gaze
Up to her steadfast lord.

Another step on the marble floor ;
'Tis thê prince's page, I trow—
His page who fought on the Syrian shore ;
He cometh sad and slow.

Fair Elinore rose in hope and fear ;
Wildly that page she met,
It was as though she hoped to hear
That her child was living yet.

“ Ah, master mine,” the sad page said,
“ God smiteth oft and sore ;
Thy little daughter dear is dead ! ”
He could not utter more.

Fair Elinore raised one bitter wail,
And she swoon'd upon the ground ;
Prince Edward's face grew somewhat pale,
But he did not breathe a sound.

And mute he stood for a moment's space,
Then slow and calmly spake,
“ Bear ye the princess from the place,
Her gentle heart will break ;
Tend her with care, and comfort her.”
Then to the king said he,

“ My lord, I grieve thy festal eve
Should thus be marr'd for me.”

Oh, greatly marvell'd Sicily's lord
His stately air to see ;

He dared not speak one pitying word,
But he watch'd him reverently.

Silent were all in the royal hall ;

Not-a breath was heard, until

A footstep fell like death's slow knell,
And every heart stood still.

A squire kneel'd lowly on the floor,
And he spake in humble tone,

“ Henry of England breathes no more ;
Thine are the crown and throne.”

A sudden change o'er the prince's brow

Like a cloud's swift shadow swept ;

The strength of his heart forsook him now—

He hid his face and wept.

Oh, greatly marvell'd Sicily's king

When the hero's tears he saw ;

From a warrior-soul those tears did spring,

And the king stood mute with awe ;

But at last he spake : “ O valorous prince,

Right strangely hast thou done ;

Thou didst shed no tear for thy daughter dear !

Thou weepedst not for thy son !

But now thine aged sire is dead,

Like a worn-out pilgrim sleeping,

Though he leaves a crown for thy royal head,

Thou like a child art weeping ! ”

His noble face did Prince Edward raise,

And his tears became him now,

Like dew-drops sheen on the laurel green

When it binds a conqueror's brow.

" Ah, king," he said, " when infants die,
 We mourn but for a day ;
 For God can restore as many more,
 Lovely and loved as they ;
 But when a noble father dies,
 Our tears pour forth like rain ;
 Once from high Heaven is a father given,
 Once—and, oh, never again !"

Reign of Edward II., 1307—1327.

The Tournament.

THE churches twelve of Wallingford,
 A stately sight they were,
 When gleaming shields were hanging
 From every column fair ;
 For a mile around the city
 Earth's alter'd face was bright
 With banner and pavilion,
 With steed, and squire, and knight.
 For King Edward holds a tournament ;
 His heralds, far and near,
 Have borne the joyous message
 To baron, prince, and peer.
 They are coming in by thousands ;
 Woe to that warrior's fame
 Whose knightly shield its place must yield
 At the wand's light touch of shame !
 The airs of heaven were wearied,
 Long ere that morning shone,

With the sounds of clashing armour
And the horn's exulting tone ;
Through many a woodland avenue,
Up many a grassy slope,
Came troops of glittering horsemen,
All gay with knightly hope.

And serfs forsake their labour,
And ladies leave their bowers ;
They gather like the bees in June
Round incense-breathing flowers.
The lists are fairly order'd,
And ever heart beats high
When the clarion's thrilling summons
Tells that the hour is nigh.

They have left each gay pavilion,
They are moving o'er the plain ;
There rides Sir Piers de Gaveston,
Chief of a king-like train :
By his proud and stately bearing,
By his fair and rich array,
Ye might take him for a monarch
Upon his crowning day ;
But like to plants that wither
In the hot sirocco's path,
So every face he passes
Grows pale with sudden wrath.
Ah, little seest thou, Gaveston,
With thy bright and reckless eye,
The doom that is before thee,
And the death that thou must die !
Yet the scowling gloom of Pembroke,
And Warwick's haughty glance,
The mutter'd curse of Arundel,
And Evreux' look askance,

The sullen frown of Lancaster,
And Warren's wrathful mien,
The bright and angry blushes
On the fair cheeks of the queen ;
Her eye's disdainful beauty
As she pass'd the foe she scorn'd—
These might have warn'd that boaster :
He was not to be warn'd !

And there rode hapless Edward,
A graceful prince and gay ;
But weakness in his ready laugh
And his eye's uncertain ray ;
Who dream'd, that saw his maiden-grasp
On his palfrey's broider'd reins,
That the blood of the old Plantagenets
Was running in his veins !

And there rode fair Queen Isabelle,
A girl scarce fifteen years ;
Like a swan on a breezeless river,
Her snowy neck she rears ;
Her beauty's proud magnificence
Was matchless in the world,
But ah ! beneath its sweet rose-wreath
Lay the dread serpent curl'd.
Her smile of treacherous softness,
Her dark and glittering eye,
Were like a slumbering tempest
In the depths of a tropic sky.

On moved the gay procession,
And many a dame did lead,
By the shining rein of a silver chain,
Her warrior's pacing steed ;
Each mantle gemm'd floats gaily,
Each courser stamps and fumes,

'Tis a heaving sea, whose billows free
Are banners and dancing plumes.

Oh, for the tongue of a minstrel,
To tell in lightning words
The deeds of that glorious tournament,
The fame of those flashing swords !
How a fair and a queenly circle
Beheld the knights engage,
Like clear stars watching steadfastly
The foaming ocean's rage ;
And amid those brows of beauty
Lofty and calm arose
The head of some ancient hero
Wearing its crown of snows ;
'Twas a thrilling sight to witness
Each worn-out warrior's gaze
On a strife where he must not mingle,
On the deeds of his younger days.

Like walls of glittering armour
At first the champions stand,
As the Red Sea stood when its raging flood
Was cleft by God's own hand.
And the crash of their strong ranks charging
Arose when they met on the plain,
Like the roar of those bursting waters
Rushing together again.

Hark, how the watchful heralds
The shouts of their onset gave,
" Charge, warriors ! Death to horses !
Fame to the sons of the brave ! "
Those shouts are rising louder
At every well-aim'd blow,
Or whenever a lance is shiver'd
Fairly on breast or brow.

The air is full of battle,
It is full of the trumpets' sound,
Of the tramp of dashing horses,
And the cries of the crowd around ;
The earth is strown with splendour,
It is strown with fair plumes torn,
With glove, and scarf, and streamer,
For the love of ladies worn ;
But each maiden watch'd her champion,
And oft her white hands sent
Fresh gifts for every token
That was lost in the tournament.
Oh ! with such eyes above them,
Such voices to cheer the strife,
No marvel those warriors tilted
Like men who are tilting for life !
But at length the sports are over !
Changed was the joyous scene,
When many a knight lay gasping,
Unhorsed upon the green ;
Their squires are near to raise them,
They bear them soft and slow,
And loving eyes all mournful
Attend them as they go.
Not oft was life in danger ;
Yet might those sweet eyes grieve
That in their sight their own true knight
Should not the wreath receive.
Now shout ye for the victor !
The warrior to whose sword
Lady, and prince, and herald
The prize of fame award !
Doubt not his heart is thrilling
Thus on the turf to kneel,

While lovely hands unloose the bands
That clasp his helm of steel !
While every lip is busy
With the honour of his name,
And with glowing cheeks each good knight speaks
The story of his fame !
Dear are thy gifts, O glory !
Dear is thy crown unstain'd,
When the true heart bears witness
That it was nobly gain'd !

Room for the queen ! she cometh
To grace the conqueror now,
With a chaplet of green laurel
She stoops to wreath his brow !
A kiss—a gem—a garland—
These hath his good lance won,
And the king's own lips give honour
To the deeds that he hath done.
With dance, and song, and banquet,
The festive day shall close,
Till, wearied out with pleasure,
The warriors seek repose.
Yet lasts the giddy revel
Till the shining east grows pale,—
Ah, what a bright beginning
For such a darksome tale !
Even then the storm had gather'd
Which should burst in coming years,
For the reign of the second Edward
Was a reign of blood and tears !

Reign of Edward III., 1327—1377.

The Black Prince of England.

I'LL tell you a tale of a knight, my boy,
 The bravest that ever was known ;
 A lion he was in the fight, my boy,
 A lamb when the battle was done.
 Oh, he need not be named ; for who has not heard
 Of the glorious son of King Edward the Third ?
 Armour he wore as black as jet ;
 His sword was keen and good ;
 He conquer'd every foe he met,
 And he spared them when subdued.
 Valiant and generous, and gentle and bold,
 Was the Black Prince of England in days of old.
 Often he charged with spear and lance
 At the head of his valorous knights ;
 But the battle of Poitiers, won in France,
 Was the noblest of all his fights ;
 And every British heart should be
 Proud when it thinks of that victory.
 The French were many—the English few ;
 But the Black Prince little heeded :
 His knights, he knew, were brave and true ;
 Their arms were all he needed.
 He ask'd not *how many* might be the foe ;
Where are they ? was all that he sought to know.
 So he spurr'd his steed, and he couch'd his lance,
 And the battle was won and lost ;
 Captive he took King John of France,
 The chief of that mighty host :

Faint grew the heart of each gallant foe ;
Their leader was taken ; their hopes were low.

Brave were the French ; but at last they yield,
All wearied and worn out :

The prince is conqueror of the field ;

And the English soldiers shout,

“ God save our prince, our mighty lord !
Victory waiteth on his sword ! ”

Of all the knights who fought that day,

James Audley was the best ;

His wounds were three, won valiantly,

On cheek, and brow, and breast :

And the Black Prince said, when the fight was o'er,
He never had seen such a knight before.

And did they chain King John of France ?

Was he in dungeon laid ?

Oh, little ye know what a generous foe

Our English Edward made !

A gentle heart, and an arm of might—

These are the things that make a knight.

He set King John on a lofty steed,

White as the driven snow,

And without all pride he rode beside,

On a palfrey slight and low :

He spoke to the king with a reverent mien,

As though the king had *his* captor been.

He treated King John like an honour'd guest ;

When at the feast he sate,

With courteous air, and with forehead bare,

The prince did on him wait ;

And even when they to England came,

Our generous hero was the same.

But the prisoner's heart it grew not light,

For all the prince could say ;

A captive king and a conquer'd knight,
 Oh, how could he be gay ?
 E'en while his courteous words were speaking,
 For his own dear France his heart was breaking.

Another lay shall the story tell
 Of this valiant king and true :
 He loved the Black Prince passing well,
 And his worth full well he knew.
 Then let us all unite to praise
 That hero of the olden days.

The Romans, when they won the day
 And bore their captives home,
 Caused them to march in sad array,
 Fetter'd and chain'd, through Rome ;
 And every foe, though good and brave,
 They held as victim or as slave.

But ours was a Christian conqueror,
 Generous, and true, and kind :
 Though the grave has now closed o'er his brow,
 He hath left this rule behind,—
 That valour should ever wedded be
 To mercy, and not to cruelty.

The Captivity of King John of France.

“ IN mine own land the sun shines bright,
 The morning breeze blows fair ;
 I must not look upon that light,
 I must not feel that air.
 The chain is heavy on my heart,
 Although my limbs are free :

A bitter, bitter loss thou art,
O precious liberty ! ”

It was King John lamented thus,
With many a mournful word ;
But gentle, kind, and chivalrous,
Was the heart of him who heard :
The Black Prince came—he loved to bring
Comfort and sweet relief,
So he spake softly to the king,
And strove to soothe his grief.

“ Now cheer thee, noble friend ! ” he said ;
“ Right bravely didst thou fight ;
Thine honour is untarnishèd ;
Thou art a stainless knight.
That man should ne'er desponding be
Who winneth fame in strife ;
'Tis a better thing than liberty,
A better thing than life.

I grant thee one full year,” he said ;
“ For a year thou shalt be free :
Go back to France, and there persuade
Thy lords to ransom thee.
But if thy ransom they refuse,
And do not heed thy pain,
Our realm must not its captive lose—
Thou must return again

So pledge me now thy royal word,
And pledge it solemnly,
That thou, the captive of my sword,
Wilt faithful be to me.”

The king he pledged his royal faith—
He pledged it gladsomely ;
He promised to be true till death :
Of joyous heart was he.

Then did those generous foes embrace
Closely as brethren might,—
“Farewell, and God be with your grace ;”—
“Farewell, thou peerless knight.”
The wind was fair, the sea was blue,
The sky without a speck,
When the good ship o’er the waters flew,
With King John upon its deck.
With eager hope his heart beat high
When he sprang on his own dear shore ;
But sad and downcast was his eye
Ere one brief month was o’er.
Glad were the lords of lovely France
When they beheld their king ;
But, oh ! how alter’d was their glance,
When he spoke of ransoming !
They told of wasted revenues,
Of fortunes waxing low ;
And when their words did not refuse,
Their looks said plainly, “No.”
Sore grew the heart of that good king,
As closed the winter drear ;
And when the rose proclaim’d the spring,
He hail’d it with a tear.
For the year was gliding fast away,
And gold he could not gain,
And honour summon’d him to pay
His freedom back again.
And now the summer-noon is bright,
The warm breeze woos the scent
From thousand roses red and white—
The year is fully spent !
“Paris, farewell, thou stately town !
Farewell, my woods and plains !

Farewell, my kingdom and my crown !
And welcome, English chains !
Trim, trim the bark, and hoist the sail,
And bid my train advance,
I have found that loyal faith may fail—
I leave thee, thankless France.”

These bitter words spake good King John ;
But his liegemen counsel gave :
“ What recks it that the year is gone ?
There yet is time to save.
Thou standest yet on thine own good land,
Forget thy plighted word,—
Remain ! and to thy foe’s demand
We’ll answer with the sword.”

But the good King John spake firm and bold ;
And oh ! his words should be
Graven in characters of gold
On each heart’s memory :
“ Were truth disown’d by all mankind,
A scorn’d and banish’d thing,
A resting-place it still should find
In the breast of every king.”

Again the good ship cleaves the sea
Before a favouring air,
But it beareth to captivity,
And not to freedom fair.
Yet when King John set foot on land,
Sad he could scarcely be,
For the Black Prince took him by the hand,
And welcomed him courteously.
To Savoy Castle he was brought,
With fair and royal state :
Full many a squire, in rich attire,
Did on his pleasure wait.

They did not as a prisoner hold
 That noble king and true,
 But as dear guest, whose high behest
 'Twas honour and joy to do.

Of treaty and of ransom then
 The prince and he had speech ;
 Like friends and fellow-countrymen,
 Great was the love of each ;
 No angry thought — no gesture proud,
 Not a hasty word they spoke,
 But a brotherhood of heart they vow'd,
 And its bond they never broke.

In Savoy Castle died King John—
 They buried him royally ;
 And grief through all the land is gone
 That such a knight should die.
 And the prince was wont to say this thing
 Whene'er his name was spoken,—
 “ He was a warrior and a king
 Whose word was never broken.”

The Six Burghers of Calais.

THE burghers six of Calais,
 True were they and brave ;
 To save their fellow-townsmen
 Their lives they freely gave.
 Will ye hear their story ?
 Come listen to my lay,
 I will tell ye of King Edward,
 The gallant and the gay.

Edward the Third of England,
A mighty prince was he ;
To win the town of Calais
He hath cross'd the sea,
With all his gallant nobles,
And all his soldiers brave,—
They were a stately party
To ride upon the wave !

Around the walls of Calais
They waited many a day,
Till the king's right royal spirit
Grew weary of delay :
His eagerness avail'd not,
The city still held out :
The king grew very angry,
But still the walls were stout.

The fury of a monarch
A stone wall cannot rend,
As little is it able
A lofty heart to bend ;
But a mightier than King Edward
Assail'd those steadfast men,—
The slow strong hand of Famine
Was closing on them then.

The feeble ones grew feebler,
The mighty ones grew weak ;
Dim was each eye, though dauntless,
And pale was every cheek :
But round about the city
That ruthless army stay'd,
So to their fainting hunger
No food might be convey'd.

The governor of Calais,¹
 A stalwart knight was he,
 For his king and for his country
 He had fought right valiantly ;
 But he found his valour useless,
 And he saw his soldiers die,
 So he came before the English,
 And spake with dignity :
 “ What terms, what terms, King Edward,
 What terms wilt thou accord,
 If I yield this goodly city
 To own thee for its lord ? ”
 King Edward gave him answer,—
 His wrath was very hot,—
 “ Ye rebel hounds of Calais,
 Your crimes I pardon not.
 Six of your richest burghers
 As captives I demand,
 On every neck a halter,
 A chain on every hand ;
 And when their lives have answer'd
 For this their city's crime,
 Then will I think of mercy,—
 Till then, it is not time.”
 The governor was silent,
 His heart was full of pain ;
 Then spake Sir Walter Manny,
 Chief of the monarch's train :
 “ The fittest time for mercy,
 My liege, is ever—*now* ;
 Oh, turn away thine anger !
 Oh, do not knit thy brow !

¹ Sir John de Vienne, a knight of great valour, was then governor of Calais.

Call back thy words, King Edward,
Call back what thou hast said,
For thou canst not call the spirit
Back to the gallant dead."

"Now hold thy peace, Sir Walter,"
The monarch sternly cried ;
"I will not be entreated,
I will not be defied !

Be silent, all my nobles :
And thou, Sir John de Vienne,
Come with six wealthy burghers,
Or come thou not again !"

The king he spake so fiercely
That no one dared reply ;
Sir John went back to Calais
Slowly and mournfully.

The warriors and the burghers
He summon'd to his hall,
And he told King Edward's pleasure,
Full sadly, to them all :

"My friends and fellow-townsmen,
Ye hear the tyrant's will ;
We had better die together,
And keep our city still !"

There was silence for a moment,—
They were feeble, they were few,
But *one* spirit was among them,
Which nothing could subdue ;

Out cried a generous burgher :
"Oh, never be it said

That the loyal hearts of Calais
To die could be afraid !

First of the destined captives
I name myself for death,

And in my Saviour's mercy
 Undoubting is my faith."
 The name of this true hero
 Ye should keep with reverent care ;
 Let it never be forgotten !—
 It was Eustace de St Pierre.

Like a watchfire lit at midnight—
 Strike but a single spark,
 And the eager flame spreads quickly
 Where all before was dark ;
 So were their spirits kindled
 By the word of bold St Pierre,
 His faith and his devotion
 Gave strength to their despair.

Five other noble merchants
 Their names that instant gave,
 To join with generous Eustace
 Their countrymen to save ;
 Their comrades wept around them
 Tears for such parting meet ;
 And they led those willing captives
 To stern King Edward's feet.

They came in brave obedience
 To Edward's fierce command ;
 On every neck a halter,
 A chain on every hand.
 Now when the king beheld them,
 Right fiery grew his eye,—
 " Strike off their heads ! " he thunder'd ;
 " Each man of them shall die ! "

But forth stepp'd Queen Philippa,¹
 The gentle, good, and fair ;

¹ Philippa of Hainault, the fair and virtuous wife of Edward III.

She kneel'd before King Edward,
And thus she spake her prayer :
(It was a sight full touching
That honour'd queen to see,
Before the knights and nobles,
Low kneeling on her knee.)
“ My loving lord and husband,”—
'Twas thus the fair queen spake,—
“ Grant me these generous captives,
Oh, spare them for my sake !
I am thy true companion ;
I cross'd the stormy sea,
A weak and fearful woman,
And all for love of thee.
I have been faithful to thee
Through all our wedded life,
Nor didst thou ever find me
A disobedient wife ;
Then do not thou repulse me
In this my first request ;
Grant me their lives, I pray thee,—
In nought have they transgress'd.”
The king look'd long upon her :
“ I would thou wert not here !
Yet I refuse thee nothing,
Because thou art so dear.”
Up sprang that joyous lady,
And eagerly she bade
That they should loose the fetters
Upon those captives laid.
From round their necks she loosen'd
The cruel halter's band ;
To each a golden noble
She gave with her own hand ;

She bade them be conducted
 Back to their native place,—
 To friends, and wives, and children,
 To the joy of their embrace.
 Oh, who shall paint their meeting !
 Oh, who shall speak their bliss !
 Too weak for aught so mighty
 The power of language is.
 How did the fond eyes brighten
 Around each quiet hearth !
 The peace of such deep rapture
 Is seldom given to earth.
 Oh, out then spake King Edward :
 “ How different are our parts !
 I may win fair cities,
 But my queen she winneth hearts.
 God bless thee, sweet Philippa ;
 And mayst thou ever be
 As dear to all the English
 As now thou art to me ! ”

Reign of Richard II., 1377—1399.

The little Queen.¹

A LITTLE child—scarce eight years old—
 And she was crown'd a queen !
 Oh, strange and scarcely to be told
 Must her young thoughts have been ;

¹ The princess Isabelle of France, who was married to King Richard II. ere she had completed her ninth year. He was then about thirty years old.

For how should pomp, and storm, and strife,
And prideful discontent,
With childhood's soft and dreamy life
Be for an instant blent ?

They took her from her mother's care,
They bore her o'er the sea,
And to the King of England fair
Wedded her solemnly.

Oh, much that mother's heart must miss,
At morn and evening hours,
Her little one's accustom'd kiss,
Dropping like dew on flowers.

Beneath grey Windsor's stately shade,
The aspect of her life
Seem'd a green, quiet forest-glade,
With songs and wood-flowers rife.

Or like the picture on a lake
When breezes are asleep,
No cloud to mar, no grief to break
Its spell so sweet and deep.

King Richard was a gentle king ;
His visits came like those
Which the gay sunshine makes in spring
To rouse the slumbering rose.

Her childish tasks were flung away,
While, laughing at her glee,
The monarch mingled in her play,
And loved its liberty.

Or down some cool, dark avenue,
Hand clasping hand, they roam,
While in her gaze his fancy drew
Pictures of days to come ;
Little reck'd she of crown or throne,
Of regal pomp and pride ;

“ Oh, would I were a woman grown,
To make *thee* blest ! ” she cried.

Ah, little knew'st thou, gentle king,
Nor thou, fair infant queen,
The storms which coming days should bring
To mar so sweet a scene ;
Rebellion through the groaning land
As a black plague-spot spread ;
The sword was rent from Richard's hand,
The circlet from his head.

To Havering Bower the queen was brought,
Where, captive and subdued,
Too soon her childish heart was taught
The cares of womanhood.

The tempest of her sudden grief
Came like a frost in spring,
That withers every bud and leaf
Before its blossoming.

Sternly her sullen guards refuse
All tidings of her lord ;
Her eager quest she oft renews,
But they answer not a word.
Strange fears upon her youthful breast
With dark forebodings fell ;
But still his name in prayer she blest,
And still she loved him well.

At length, one summer's morn, 'tis said,
Forth journeying from her bower,
She met the rebel troop who led
Her monarch to the Tower.

O piteous meeting ! Grave surprise
Check'd even the gaoler train,
When from that child's young earnest eyes
The tears broke forth like rain.

She spoke not many words, but strove,
In broken phrase and brief,
Somewhat of comfort and of love
To mingle with his grief ;

“ God will protect thee in thy fall,”

(Thus sobb'd the captive queen) ;

“ Oh, father, mother, husband, all,
Thou unto me hast been ! ”

It is sad to see an infant fade
Beneath our very gaze,
As a lily in some poisonous shade
Droops, withers, and decays ;
It is sad to see the eye's pure light
Grow fainter day by day,
And the young, young life, so fresh and bright,
Ebb gradually away.

But sadder when the *heart's* young life
In the glory of its morn
Is dimm'd by grief, and marr'd by strife,
And stifled ere it dawn ;
When childhood's hopes are changed to fears,
And childhood's mirth to gloom,
And life's great treasure-house of tears
Is open'd in life's bloom !

His crown, his hopes, his freedom gone,
King Richard pined away,
Till they slew him in his dungeon lone,
Like a lion brave at bay ;
In vain his single strength he sets
'Gainst the rebels' leaguèd power,
Though the soul of the Plantagenets
Was strong in him that hour.

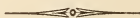
Long, long the false usurper tried,
With speech and promise fair,

To win his captive queen as bride
For Henry, England's heir.
Ever she answer'd steadfastly,
As one that shrank from strife,
"King Richard's widow will I die,
As I have lived his wife!

Still are mine eyes with weeping dim ;
And 'twere a fearful thing
That I should wed the son of him
Who slew my gentle king."
In woe her snowy hands she wrung,
And went to weep apart ;
'Twas marvel that a child so young
Should be so true of heart.

Thus years all bootlessly were spent
In pleadings strong but vain ;
Till, freed at last, the exile went
Back to her France again.
Oh, trust me, many tears she shed
As she forsook the land
Where the lord she loved so much lay dead,
Slain by a traitor's hand.

A place of grief had England been—
Of grief, and woe, and wrong,
Crushing the heart of that child-queen,
So desolate and young :
Yet firm was she, though wrath might burn,
And civil war rage wild.
Ah, let all men a lesson learn
From that fair, faithful child !



lays and Ballads.

PART SECOND.

The Lay of King James I. in his Captivity.

[James the First was the second son of King Robert III., and became heir to the throne of Scotland at the age of eleven years by the death of his elder brother, the unfortunate Earl of Rothsay, who was barbarously starved to death in prison by his own uncle, the wicked Duke of Albany. James fell into the hands of the English, and was detained by them in captivity during eighteen years. He was imprisoned in Windsor Castle; and from the window of his tower he was wont to see the Lady Joanna, the fair daughter of the Earl of Somerset, walking among her flowers in the garden. He fell in love with her; and when he was at length ransomed by his people, he conducted her to Scotland as his Queen. He was a man of high and energetic intellect, indomitable resolution, and intense devotion to his country, which he earnestly longed to rescue from the misery and misrule by which it was distracted, while given up to the government of his unprincipled uncle and yet more worthless cousins.]

MORN to eve, and eve to morn,
Listless heart and eyes unsleeping—
Want, or woe, or pain, or scorn,
O'er this lifeless desert sweeping,
Welcome were, as pangs, for me
Breaking death's dread lethargy.

Like the wretch, whose weary pace
To and fro, for years alone,

Left at length an awful trace
Printed on the unyielding stone,
Time's slow footsteps, day by day,
Wear my very soul away.

Creeping through this narrow gate,
Stretching o'er these walls of gloom,
Even the air is like a weight,
Even the sky is like a tomb ;
Nature's noble things and free
Put on dreariness for me.

Nay, it is not thus ! I have
Empire o'er a world within ;
Lo, my kingly wand I wave,
Lo, the shadowy scenes begin !
Veilèd shapes of hours unknown
Stand before my spirit's throne.

Life—mine own, my coming life !
Well I know what thou shalt be ;
Shining bliss and stormy strife,
Labour, hope, and victory !
Ceaseless efforts upward tending,
And at last in triumph ending !

Thou hast gifts, and thou hast tasks,—
Give the last—mine aim is won !
Only this my spirit asks,
Strength and space to labour on ;
Lo, mine eyes exulting see
Scotland blest, and blest through me !

Ah, my country ! Prostrate now,
Crownless, comfortless, forlorn,
Like a noble stag brought low,
Striving, sinking, bleeding, torn ;
All thine ancient honour dies,
In the dust thy glory lies !

Mine to stanch those gaping wounds,
 Mine to raise that shadow'd face,
 Mine to chain those ruthless hounds,
 Baying on their bloody chase ;
 Mine to wreath thy brows once more
 With the bays which once they wore.

Oh, for power ! But it shall come !

By thy woods, and steeps, and seas,
 Every hearth shall be a home,

Every heart shall be at peace ;
 In thy huts no slaves shall be,
 In thy halls no tyranny !

If then, night and day alike,

I a wakeful warder stand,
 Swift to spare, yet prompt to strike,
 Calm of heart, and strong of hand ;
 Lone were such a lot, and hard,
 Were itself its sole reward.

But a dearer hope is mine,

Not unshared my toils shall be—
 Shining as a star may shine

O'er the stern and troubled sea,
 Hope, and guide, and goal thou art
 In the brightness of thy heart !

Known but dimly from afar,

Seen but through a dungeon-grate,
 Still thine eye hath been my star,—

Still thy smile shall be my fate ;
 Throned upon that brow serene,
 Strength, hope, purity, are seen.

Wherefore rise those blushes bright,

Half ashamed, beneath my gazing ?
 Wherefore sink thine eyes of light,
 Scarce their ivory veil upraising ?

'Tis the future stirs within thee,
Thou shalt love, and I shall win thee !

Fare thee well ! God's favour rest
On thy home, thy heart, and thee !
Still thou leav'st my spirit blest,
Blest in hope and memory ;
Past and Future round me seem,
While the Present is a dream.

Dungeon-bar and galling chain,
Are ye past away from me ?
Ay, for outward bonds are vain
While the kingly heart is free !
Father, to my spirit's night
Thou hast spoken—there is light !

The Death of James I.

PAST was the day of festal mirth ;
The monarch stood beside the hearth,
Whose flickering brands cast changeful glow
On his bright eye and stately brow ;
Upon that calm and noble face
Deep thoughts had left their living trace,—
Thoughts, such as press, with giant power,
A common life into an hour ;
Each line of lofty meaning there
Was graven by the hand of care,
And the flash of that triumphant eye,
That arching lip's stern majesty,
Told of full many a foe withstood,—
Without, disdain'd—within, subdued !

But gentler thoughts arise—and well
That smile's subduing light may tell
(Like gleams that break the thunder-cloud,
Speaking of heaven behind its shroud)
How 'neath that haughty aspect lies
A heart of kindest sympathies.
Oh, still that smile must shine most bright
On her who lives but in its light,
His queen, his lady—born to share
His fleeting joy, his ceaseless care ;
Watching his fame with pride, as prone
To think his greatest deeds her own,
Yet with deep love, that strives to make
Herself as nothing for his sake.

Now at his feet she sits,—how fair
That spacious brow and shining hair,
Those lips no painter's art could reach,
Those glistening eyes whose light is speech,
That slender form of stately mien,
That softest cheek, as crystal sheen,
Whose hue was of such tender rose
As sunset flings on fallen snows ;
No marvel that the monarch's eye
Dwells on her face delightedly,
No marvel that he loves to meet
A gaze so fond, so full, so sweet !

Silent around, a graceful band,
The maidens of her service stand,
With snooded brow, and plaided breast,
And bearing modest, but serene.
First 'mid the fairest and the best
Have Scotia's daughters ever been ;
They pass the tale, the song, the jest—
A blither group was never seen.

Oh, pause a while, brief hours of bliss !
 Upon a scene so sweet as this,
 Oh, ruthless night, forbear to close,
 With thy grim train of ghastly woes !
 In vain ! It comes, the hour of doom ;
 These joys but herald deeper gloom,
 They are as flowers that hide a tomb !

What sound was that ? The clash of mail ?
 Why turns each lovely cheek so pale ?
 Why start they from their seats, and stand
 Each clasping quick her neighbour's hand ?
 Again !—and nearer !—hark, a cry
 As of a brave heart's agony ;
 A shriek that rends the quivering air,
 The very cadence of despair !
 Oh, save the king ! No thought has power
 But this in such a fearful hour ;
 Oh, save the king ! Too well we know
 They come, they come, the traitor foe !
 All hope is vain, the guards are slain,
 Each faithful to his care,
 The gates are past, and clattering fast,
 With a sound like a rushing thunder-blast,
 Their tramp is on the stair !
 Not to yon casement fly—beneath
 Stand the grim messengers of death,
 Their dull blades in the moonshine gleaming,
 With the blood of loyal hearts all steaming !
 There is a cell beneath the floor,
 Oh, seek it ere they burst the door !
 One effort more,—they lift the board,—
 By eager hands impell'd, implored,
 Even in that hour of agony
 Disdaining from his foes to fly,

The king descends—too late, too late !
 His strife is vain who strives with fate ;
 They come—each step resounding near
 Strikes like a stab upon the ear !

Shall Scotland's prince thus aidless die,
 And with a Douglas standing by ?
 Forbid it, years of faith and fame,
 Clothing in light that ancient name !
 Barr'd is that quivering door,—but how ?
 'Tis by a slender arm of snow !

A girl hath darted from the band,
 And, where the weighty bar should stand,
 She thrusts her soft, slight arm, and cries,
 With whitening lips and gleaming eyes,
 “ 'Tis fast—a woman's arm is there ;
 Now, men, come onward if ye dare ! ”

Without a sound or start,
 Breathless she stood—the first fell stroke
 That fragile barrier crush'd and broke,
 But not one cry of terror woke

From that undaunted heart !
 Till, as they dropp'd the sheltering plank,
 Loosing her desperate hold, she sank
 (For then the iron hand of pain
 Closed on her heart and chill'd each vein) ;
 She sank, but ere her senses fled,
 “ Thank God ! he's saved ! ” she faintly said.

Such deeds can woman's spirit do—
 O Catharine Douglas, fair and true,
 Let Scotland keep thy holy name
 Still first upon her ranks of fame !

Kind was that swoon ! Thou didst not see
 What deeds of horror then befell ;
 Well may thy comrades envy thee,
 Blind to that piteous spectacle !

Those sounds of woe thou didst not hear,
Thou didst not see that sight of fear,
 When banded traitors slew their king ;
When, weeping, with dishevell'd hair,
In pale but beautiful despair,
A queen, a wife, a woman, there
Did kneel to men who scorn'd her prayer,
Her husband and their prince to spare !
Ah, hapless queen ! As hopeful 'twere
Round the roused tiger in his lair
 For mercy and for aid to cling !
All bleeding sinks she in the dust,
 Pierced by some stern and savage hand—
Let shame's irreparable rust
 For ever stain that ruthless brand !
Let that foul deed recorded be,
A warning to futurity,
What fiends in man's dark breast awaken
When loyal faith is once forsaken !
Like a chased lion, wounded, worn,
 But still terrific in his fall,
With ebbing strength and eyes of scorn
 The king confronts those traitors all ;
Outnumber'd soon, but unsubdued,
He sinks before them in his blood—
No victors they,—the hero dies,
Worn out with useless victories !
Weep, Scotland, weep, that tameless soul,
 That heart, great, generous, warm, and true ;
As countless ages onward roll,
 Such spirits come but far and few.
Weep, Scotland, weep, and not in vain ;
Thy tears have wash'd away the stain,
An hundred deeds of after-time

Have well redeem'd that hour of crime ;
 Though darkening shame defile the name
 And scutcheon of the traitor Grahame,
 How Scotsmen for their king can die
 Let Cameron and Montrose reply !

The Lay of Sir William Wallace.

THE grey hill and the purple heath
 Are round me as I stand ;
 The torrent hoar doth sternly roar,
 The lake lies calm and grand ;
 The altars of the living rock
 'Neath yon blue skies are bare,
 And a thousand mountain-voices mock
 Mine accents on the air.

O land most lovely and beloved—
 Whether in morn's bright hues,
 Or in the veil, so soft, so pale,
 Woven by twilight dews,
 God's bounty pours from sun and cloud
 Beauty on shore and wave,—
 I lift my hands, I cry aloud,
 Man shall not make thee slave !

Ye everlasting witnesses,—
 Most eloquent, though dumb,—
 Sky, shore, and seas, light, mist, and breeze,
 Receive me, when I come !
 How could I, in this holy place,
 Stand with unshamèd brow,
 How look on earth's accusing face,
 If I forget my vow ?

Not few nor slight his burdens are
Who gives himself to stand
Steadfast and sleepless as a star,
Watching his fatherland ;
Strong must his will be, and serene,
His spirit pure and bright,
His conscience vigilant and keen,
His arm an arm of might.

From the closed temple of his heart,
Seal'd as a sacred spring,
Self must he spurn, and set apart
As an unholy thing ;
Misconstrued where he loves the best,
Where most he hopes, betray'd,
The quenchless watchfire in his breast
Must neither fail nor fade.

And his shall be a holier meed
Than earthly lips may tell ;—
Not in the end, but in the deed,
Doth truest honour dwell.

His land is one vast monument,
Bearing the record high
Of a spirit with itself content,
And a name that cannot die !

For this, with joyous heart, I give
Fame, pleasure, love, and life ;
Blest, for a cause so high, to live
In ceaseless, hopeless strife :
For this to die, with sword in hand,
Oh, blest and honour'd thrice !—
God, countrymen, and fatherland,
Accept the sacrifice !

Bruce and Douglas.

LAY THE FIRST.

THE DEATH OF BRUCE.

THERE is darkness in the chamber,
 There is silence by the hearth,
 For pale, and cold, and dying
 Lies a great one of the earth ;
 That eye's dim ray is faint and grey,
 Those lips have lost their red,
 And powerless is a people's love
 To lift that languid head.

Through hilly Caledonia
 Woe spreadeth far and fast,
 As spreads the shadow of a cloud
 Before a thunder-blast,—
 For it is THE BRUCE whose mighty heart
 Is beating now its last !

A tearful group was gathered
 Around that bed of death :
 There stood undaunted Randolph
 Knight of the Perfect Wreath ;
 And Campbell, strong and steadfast
 Through danger and despair ;
 And valiant Grey, and stern La Haye,
 And loyal Lennox there ;
 There, last in name, but first in fame,
 And faithful to the end,
 All weeping stood Lord James the Good,
 True knight and constant friend ;

And there, with eyes of grave surprise,
 Fast rooted to the place,
 The monarch's son, scarce four years old,
 Gazed in his father's face !
 But the stillness of that solemn room
 Was stirr'd by scarce a breath—
 Silent were all, and silently
 THE BRUCE encounter'd Death.

They stood and saw, with reverent awe,
 How ever, upward glancing,
 He seem'd to watch some dim array
 Of warrior-shapes advancing ;
 For as he lay in silence,
 There pass'd before his eyes,
 Like a slow and stately pageant,
 His life's long memories.

And first—brief days of bitter shame,
 Repented and disown'd—
 His early sins before him came,
 By many an after-deed of fame
 Effaced and well atoned.
 One passing shade of noble grief
 Darken'd the brow of the dying chief,
 But fast it faded from the sight,
 Lost in his life's remember'd light ;
 For then of burning thoughts arose
 A shadowy and unnumber'd host,—
 And Methven's field of blood and woes,
 And Rachrin's unforgotten coast,
 Where Freedom's form through gloom and storm,
 Did first for Scotland shine,
 As faint by night a beacon-light
 Glimmers through mist and brine.

And Arran's isle, by shady Clyde,
 Where, when the summer noon was high,
 Friends, parted long and sorely tried,
 Met, and went forth to victory ;
 Where loud the Bruce his bugle wound,
 And Douglas answer'd to the sound !

Then name by name, and deed by deed,
 Bright trains of glorious thought succeed ; —
 The midnight watch, till o'er the foam
 Gleam'd the lone beacon guiding home,
 And on old Carrick's well-loved shore
 The exile plants his foot once more ;
 The ford, beside whose waters grey
 His single arm kept hosts at bay ;
 The hurrying march, the bold surprise,
 The chase, the ambush, the disguise.

Now leader of a conquering band,
 Now track'd by bloodhounds swift and stern ;
 Till Glory's sun, at God's command,
 Stood still at last on BANNOCKBURN,
 And stamp'd in characters of flame
 On Scottish breasts THE BRUCE'S name.—
 Oh, seldom deathbed memories
 Are populous with thoughts like these !

To the face of the dying monarch
 Came a sudden glow, and proud,
 But brief as the tinge of sunset
 Flung on a wandering cloud ;
 But see—his lips are parting,
 Though scarce a sound be heard,—
 Down stoops the noble Douglas
 To catch each feeble word ;
 And all the knights and warriors,
 Holding their tighten'd breath,

Close in a narrower circle
 Around the couch of death.

“ O Douglas, O my brother !
 My heart is ill at ease ;
 Unceasingly mine aching eye
 One haunting vision sees ;
 It sees the lengthen'd arches,
 The solemn aisles of prayer,
 And the death of the traitor Comyn
 Upon the altar-stair.
 Woe's me ! that deed unholy
 Lies like a heavy weight,
 Crushing my wearied conscience
 Before heaven's open gate.
 Fain would I wend a pilgrim
 Forth over land and sea,
 Where God's dear Son for sinners died—
 Alas, it must not be !
 But if thy love be steadfast
 As it was proved of yore,—
 When these few struggling pulses
 Are still'd, and all is o'er,
 Unclose this lifeless bosom,
 Take thence this heart of mine,
 And bear it safely for my sake
 To holy Palestine :
 Well pleased my heart shall tarry
 In thy fair company ;
 For it was wont, while yet in life,
 Ever to dwell with thee.”

The dying king was silent ;
 And down the Douglas kneel'd—
 A kiss upon his sovereign's hand
 His ready promise seal'd ;

Never a word he answer'd,
In sorrow strong and deep,
But he wept, that iron soldier,
Tears such as women weep.
The Bruce hath prest him to his breast
With faint but eager grasp,
And the strong man's arm was tremulous
As that weak dying clasp !

The last embrace unloosing,
The monarch feebly cried,
" Oh, lift me up, my comrades dear,
And let me look on Clyde ! "

Widely they flung the casement,
And there in beauty lay
That broad and rolling river
All sparkling to the day.
The Bruce beheld its waters
With fix'd and wistful eye,
Where calm regret was blending
With bright expectancy ;
And then, with sudden effort,
Somewhat his arms he raised,
As one that would have fain embraced
The things on which he gazed.
And then on those who held him
There fell a strange deep thrill—
For the lifted arms dropp'd heavily,
The mighty heart was still !

Hush'd was the voice of weeping—
Mutely did Douglas close
The eyes of the illustrious dead
For their last, long repose ;
And backwards from the couch they drew
Softly and reverently ;

For solemn is the face of death,
 Though full of hope it be!

LAY THE SECOND.

THE BRUCE'S HEART.

It was Lord James of Douglas
 Set sail across the brine,
 With a warrior band, to seek the land
 Of holy Palestine.
 Stately and gay was his bold array,
 With plume and pennon streaming,
 With the sounding horn at break of day,
 With cluster'd lances gleaming.

A nobler knight than the good Lord James,
 In sooth, is seldom seen :
 His words, though few, were straight and true
 As his sword so bright and keen ;
 Dark was his cheek, and dark his eye,
 But lit with a fiery glow,
 And his form of lofty majesty
 Beseem'd a king, I trow.

Beneath his vest a silver case,
 At a string of silk and gold,
 For ever lay, by night and day,
 Upon his bosom bold ;
 That casket none must hope to win
 By force or fraudulent art,
 For priceless was the wealth within—
 It held THE BRUCE'S heart !

In far Dunfermline's towers he lay
 In honour'd sleep, and there

Had loyal Douglas kneel'd to pay
His vows, and lift his prayer,
When stole along the steeps and glades
The noiseless tread of Night,
And Moonshine with her massy shades
And cold clear lines of light.

And there he laid upon his breast
The heart of the mighty dead,—
Sign that his monarch's last behest
Should be accomplished.

That solemn hour, that awful scene,
Bare witness to his vow ;
And soon the waves of ocean green
Danced round his daring prow.

Lord James hath landed in fair Castile,—
Where, waiting by the sea,
Alphonso of Spain with a glittering train
Hath welcomed him royally :
But woe was in that lovely land ;
For, from Granada's towers,
Dark Osmyn's fierce and ruthless band
Ravaged its myrtle bowers.

The Douglas gazed on the leafy shore,
He gazed on the ocean blue,
And the swarthy light in his eye grew bright,
And his gleaming sword he drew :
“ Wert *thou* at my side, my king,” he cried,
“ Thy voice's well-known sounds
Would bid me aid these Christian knights
To chase these Paynim hounds ! ”

Then joy went forth through all the land ;
And hurrying thousands came
To see the chief whose valorous hand
Had won him deathless fame.

There stood a knight on the monarch's right,
 Well proved in bloody wars ;
 His face, I trow, from chin to brow,
 Was seam'd with ghastly scars.

“ Lord Douglas, thou hast been,” quoth he,
 “ In battles from thy youth ;
 Good faith, I marvel much to see
 Thy manly face so smooth.”

“ I thank my God,” the Douglas said,
 “ Whose favour and whose grace
 These hands have ever strengthened
 Thus to protect my face.”

But the clarion's thrilling note was heard,—
 And, loosing each his rein,
 Their fiery steeds the warriors spurr'd
 Down to the battle-plain ;
 So swiftly on their way they went,
 So brightly their mail was flashing,
 That they might seem a mountain-stream
 O'er the edge of a tall cliff dashing.

In full noonday the fair array
 Of turban'd Moslems shone,
 Like a cluster strange of gorgeous flowers
 Of form and clime unknown ;
 But when his arm each lifted, swinging
 His keen and twisted blade,
 It was like a glittering snake upspringing
 Out of the flower's soft shade.

Lord Douglas look'd on the crescent proud,
 And his Christian heart beat high :
 “ Charge, countrymen ! ” he shouted loud ;
 “ For God and Scotland, I ! ”

Oh, never did eagle on its prey
 Dart with a feller swoop

Than bounded the angry Scots that day
On the Saracen's startled troop!
Like hunted tigers o'er the plain
The Moors are flying fast—
Like huntsmen true the Scots pursue
With shout and clarion blast:
But track the tiger to his lair,
And the tiger turns to spring—
Brave hearts, beware; for still despair
Is a fierce and fearful thing!
The Moors have wheel'd on that fatal field,
They gather and they stand,
And the wild long yell of "Allah hu!"
Is heard on every hand;
They are circling about their daring foes
In a grim and narrowing bound,
As the walls of a burning jungle close
The awe-struck traveller round.
The foremost there fell brave St Clair—
That saw the Douglas bold,
And did unloose the Heart of Bruce
From its string of silk and gold;
He hurl'd it through the serried spears,
And his lifted voice rang high—
"Pass to the front, as thou wert wont!
I follow thee, or die!"
The day hath closed on fair Castile,
The sinking sun gleams red
On shatter'd plumes and broken steel,
And piles of gallant dead;
In the centre of that bloody field
Lord Douglas lay in death,—
Above him was his own good shield,
And the Bruce's heart beneath!

No tears for him! In Honour's light,
As he had lived, he fell.
Good night, thou dauntless soul, good night,
For sure thou sleepest well!
Full hearts and reverent hands had those
Who bare thee on thy bier
Back to the place of thy repose—
Thy Scotland, famed and dear!

A valiant knight the casket bore :
And for that honour'd part,
His scutcheon wore for evermore
A padlock and a heart.
They buried the Douglas in St Bride ;
And the heart of Bruce they laid
In Melrose stately aisles, beside
The altar's sacred shade.

Not mine, with hand profane, to trace
Grey Melrose towers around,—
There is a Presence in the place,
Making it holy ground.
Strewing their snows on that fair spot,
May countless years succeed,
But they sever not the name of Scott
From Melrose and from Tweed !



Grizzel Hume.

[Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, afterwards Lord Marchmont, was one of the leaders of the Jerviswood plot in the reign of Charles II. When this conspiracy was discovered, Sir Patrick, having narrowly escaped falling into the hands of those who were sent to arrest him, concealed himself in a vault in the churchyard of Polwarth, and remained there till his enemies had given up seeking for him in that neighbourhood. During his sojourn in this dark and melancholy lurking-place, his daughter Grizzel, a girl about eighteen years old, conveyed provisions to her father every night. She was obliged to go forth alone, at midnight, for 'this purpose ; and great must have been her alarm and anxiety during each of these perilous expeditions ; for had chance discovered her to any evil-disposed person, the secret of her father's hiding-place must inevitably have been discovered, and there can be but little doubt that he would have shared the fate of the noble Baillie of Jerviswood, who, having refused to purchase safety by becoming a witness against Lord Russell, suffered death about this time. Vide SCOTT'S *Tales of a Grandfather* : 2nd Series, vol. ii.]

WHEN midnight flung o'er earth and sea
 Her solemn veil of gloom,
 All fearless and alone was she,
 The Lady Grizzel Hume,—
 Lighted beneath that sable sky
 By her young heart's fidelity.
 With eyes of hope, and peace, and truth,—
 Violets half hid in snow ;
 Wearing the glory of her youth
 Upon a cloudless brow ;
 Oh, seldom hath the silent night
 Look'd down upon so fair a sight !
 She glides along the shadowy copse,
 By field, and hill, and tree,
 Light as the noiseless dew, that drops
 When none can hear nor see ;
 Before her home at last she stands,
 And lifts the latch with trembling hands.

“ Oh, speak, my child, the night is dark,
Thou comest pale and fast ! ”

“ I heard the startled watchdog's bark
As his lonely lair I past,
And hurried on, in fear lest he
Should rouse some lurking enemy.”

“ And couldst thou pass the churchyard drear
Nor pause in chilly dread ? ”

“ Nay, mother, wherefore should I fear
The mute and peaceful dead ?
I only thought, how calm they sleep
Who neither feel, nor fear, nor weep.”

“ Did not thy weary footsteps stray ?
The path was dark and long.”

“ Oh, God was with me on my way,
And so my heart was strong ;
I ever thought the stars did shed
A gracious blessing on my head.”

“ And didst thou see thy father's face ? ”
(But here she paused to weep.)

“ Ah, mother, yes ! I pray for grace
His sweet behest to keep ;
He bid me labour still to make
Thy spirit happy, for his sake.”

“ Bless thee, my comfort and my child ! ”

“ I wept—I could not speak—
He parted back my hair, and smiled,
And kiss'd me on the cheek,
And said I bravely did, and well,
To visit his forsaken cell.”

“ And look'd he pale ? ” “ Ay, somewhat pale,
But firm and blithe of cheer,
Like one whose heart could never fail,
Whose spirit never fear ;

And calm and steadfastly he spake
Of things whereat my heart must break.
Yes, changeless was his aspect when
 He said that he might die ;
But he murmur'd Monmouth's name, and then
 A tear was in his eye,
And he brake off, as though in fear
That sound of woe to speak or hear.
He bade me pray at morn and eve
 That God would make him strong
Calmly to die, but never leave
 The right, nor love the wrong.
I pray,—sweet mother, join me thus,—
God give my father back to us !”
Mother and child knelt mutely there,—
 A sight that angels love ;
The incense of their tearful prayer
 Rose to the heavens above ;
And softer sleep, and hopes more bright,
Came to their troubled hearts that night.
Full oft, when fairer days were come,
 Beside a peaceful hearth
That father bless'd his God for HOME,—
 The happiest place on earth ;
And bent his head, and smiled to see
His daughter's first-born climb his knee.
Then, as the wondering child would gaze
 Into the old man's face,
He told of dark and troublous days,
 Defeat, despair, disgrace ;
Of Sedgemoor's field—oh, bitter word !
And lone Inchinnan's fatal ford.
And how, through many a weary day,
 In want, and woe, and gloom,

A hunted fugitive he lay
 The tenant of a tomb,
 With one weak girl, so pale and fair,
 His ministering spirit there ;
 How that bold heart and childlike form
 Night after night would brave
 The blast, the darkness, and the storm,
 To seek his lonely cave—
 He paused, to show with grateful pride
 The blushing matron at his side.

Francis the First at Liberty,

AFTER THAT SHAMEFUL IMPRISONMENT WHICH WAS THE
 RESULT OF HIS DEFEAT AT PAVIA.

I AM once more a king !
 Wave forth, my pennon fair !
 My foot is on mine own dear soil,
 I am free as my native air !
 Spring on, my gallant steed,
 Thou may'st bound blithely on,
 For thou bear'st to his home a warrior freed,
 And a king to his crown and throne !
 Leap from thy sheath, my sword !
 I may wield thee once again ;
 I could not brook on thy sheen to look
 While writhing in a chain.
 I will not bid thee shine
 Now to avenge my wrongs,
 For, oh, to a heart as light as mine
 No bitterness belongs !

These are thy vales, fair France !
 Mine, mine, this matchless land ;
Dearer than gold in heaps untold,
 Or aught save faith and brand.
The song of thy birds is sweet,
 Thy plains seem doubly fair,
And, oh, how my heart leaps forth to meet
 Each breath of thy balmy air !
Play on my brow, cool breeze,
 For thou wakenest in my heart
High thoughts and generous sympathies,
 Which long have slept apart.
It is the voice of France
 Which breathes upon me now ;
I will open my breast to thy glad advance,—
 Play lightly on my brow !
I am free ! I am free ! I am free !
 I may give my full heart way ;
Its fire repress hath scorch'd my breast,
 It pants for the open day.
I am free ! I am free ! I am free !
 Oh, is it a dream of joy ?
Or do I stand on my native land,
 And look on mine own blue sky ?
I do, I do ! for when
 Did a Spaniard's icy brow
Shine in the light of smiles so bright
 As those which meet me now !
Mine own—ye are all mine own !
 I laugh at treason's darts ;
For my people's love is my loftiest throne,
 My surest fence their hearts.
And, by mine own true sword,
 No wrong shall e'er abase

The soul on which your love is pour'd,
To do that love disgrace !
Still in my changeless breast
Dwells one unsullied spring ;
Free, chained, exalted, or oppress'd,
My soul is still a king !

The Battle of Antioch.

[The legend on which this ballad is founded is narrated in Mr James's
Life of Richard Cœur de Lion.]

THE clear eye of morning was cloudless and blue,
And the air was all fresh with the fragrance of dew,
And the cheeks of the Christians with watching were
pale ;
But their hearts were as strong as their double-link'd
mail
Round the walls of that city so stately and fair
The Saracen banners were soaring in air ;
And countless and bright was that host of the brave
As sparkles of foam on the storm-cloven wave.
Lo, the gates are flung wide, and the Christian host
comes,
Their plumes waving time to the roll of their drums ;
All pale was each cheek, and all proud was each eye,
For the souls that spake through them were purposed
to die !
Like youth in its buoyancy, joyous and proud,
Was the shining array of the Saracen crowd ;
Like the last hours of manhood, all grief-worn and wan,
But unshaken and fearless, the Christians came on.

They met as the hurricane meeteth the storm
When the fiend of the tempest unveils his dark form,
And the lightnings are marshall'd in heaven's high
field,—

Woe, woe for the Christians ! they waver, they yield !

They waver, the weary, the faint, and the few ;
But still bold is their front as their spirits are true ;
And brave were the hearts that had breathed out their
life

Ere the banner of Tancred went down in the strife.

Full dark was the shadow which then overspread
The face of their leader, as groaning he said,
Upstretching his arms to the cold, changeless sky,
“ Now God to the rescue, for man can but die ! ”

And lo, as he speaks, in the distance appears
A band of bright horsemen with star-pointed spears ;
Their vesture was white as the sea's snowy surf,
And printless the step of their steeds on the turf.

So mutely they swept o'er the hill's haughty crest,
As the snow rushes down on the river's broad breast,
All noiseless and swift, all resplendent and white,
Like the fires of the north in the loneliness of night.

They turn not, they pause not, they break not their
ranks,

But, fast as a torrent o'er-sweeping its banks,
Yet firm as the marching of battle-proved men,
They charge and they shatter the false Saracèn.

That charge who withstandeth ? They came like the
wind,

And they went as they came—but what left they be-
hind ?

In shame and in shrieking, in wounds and in loss,
The Crescent hath fled from the might of the Cross !

The Christians have kneel'd 'mid the dying and slain,
 And their psalm of thanksgiving soars up from the
 plain :

“ Now, down with the Paynim ! his power is o'erthrown,
 For God hath been speedy to succour His own ! ”

The Death of the Captal de Buch.

[The Captal de Buch was truly a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. That fierce and savage insurrection of the populace, called the *Jacquerie*, was put down by his valour and resolution, almost unassisted. He was the friend and brother in arms of the Black Prince, whose death was communicated to him while languishing in a French prison. On hearing the mournful tidings he refused all comfort, and died within two or three days—one of the few authentic instances on record of death from what is commonly called “a broken heart.”]

THE royal moon shone silver bright
 Upon a prison-grate,
 Where, his chains glancing to her light,
 A lonely captive sate ;
 Strange was it to behold his brow
 So stately and so free,
 For twice three years had witness'd now
 His stern captivity.

No change had pass'd upon his face,
 No dimness on his eye,
 Where shone in glory and in grace
 The soul of chivalry !
 True had he kept his loyal faith,
 And true his knightly sword,
 Nor bribe, nor threat, nor chains, nor death,
 Could turn him from his word.

Slow moves the bolt—his captors come ;
He starts with burning cheek ;
“ Oh, say, what news ? what news from home ?
How fares my chieftain ? Speak ! ”
Their eyes no sympathy evince,
They answer cold and slow,
“ Nay, ask not of thy sable prince,
He died six days ago ! ”
Stern were their hearts and chill with pride ;
But when his face they saw,
They could not choose but turn aside
Their gaze in very awe :
What years of anguish fail'd to do,
At once that instant wrought,
The heart which nothing could subdue
Was broken—by a *thought* !
His mailless hands a while he prest
Over his aching eyes,
Until the tumult of his breast
Broke forth in words and sighs :
“ Ah, thou, the gentlest, bravest, first,
Model of friend and foe,
How should the heart refuse to burst
Which hears that thou art low ?
Not on the battle-plain, my chief,
Where knightly banners wave,
And trumpets sound their warlike grief
Over the hero's grave ;
Not on thy shield or in thy tent,
With comrades weeping nigh,—
In this thy native element
Thou wert not given to die !
But sickness had its task, to wear
Thy glorious soul away,

And I,—O God! I was not there
 To soothe thy closing day!
 With nought to cheer thy wasting pain
 Save thine unconquer'd heart
 (*That* all-sufficient to sustain),
 So, so didst thou depart!

I lift no prayer for thy repose,
 God gives the crown to worth,
 And well I know thou art of those
 Who earn'd it while on earth;
 For me—my pilgrimage is done,
 My noon of life is grey,
 Mine eyes have seen their guiding sun
 Go down while it was day!"

He ceased, and from his side unbound
 The sword which still he wore;
 He cast it sternly on the ground,
 And grasp'd it never more!
 He turn'd him from the oppressive light;
 Calmly and silently
 As sets a star in cloudless night,
 So did the hero die!

The Choice of the Christian Heroes.

[See Addison's History of the Knights Templars.]

It was the hour of evening prayer,
 It was the holy Sabbath night,
 Sunset was glowing in the air,
 Placid, and calm, and bright;
 When fierce Saladin did call
 To his side his warriors all,

And in proud array they wound their way
 Up green Tiberias' height.
 With fetter'd hand and weary soul
 Each Christian captive follow'd on,
 Submissive to that base control
 Till the fair hill was won ;
 Oh, what depth of fire suppress'd
 Must have burn'd in every breast !
 For they were the knights of a thousand fights,
 Of the Temple and St John.
 They stood and held their very breath,
 With rising heart and filling eye,
 For the blue sea of Genesareth
 Beneath their feet did lie ;
 Yon hills are guardians of the shore
 Where oft their Saviour trod before ;
 And their hands are bound, and the holy ground
 Is the prey of Moslemrie !
 And lo ! it is the very hour
 When on their far, their Christian shore,
 Those they best love, from hall and bower
 Wend to the church's door ;
 Full many a heart is lifting prayer
 For them—the lonely captives there ;
 And some they frown, and some look down,
 For their eyes are running o'er.
 Stately and sad, an old knight spake :
 “ Why, tyrants, have ye brought us here ?
 Say, did ye wish to see them *break*
 The hearts which cannot *fear* ?
 Know, our God will give us might
 Even to look upon this sight.
 My brethren, dry each drooping eye ;
 The foe beholds your tear ! ”

The Moslem chieftain answer'd him :

“ Captives, look round ye, as ye stand ;
Look, ere the twilight closeth dim,
Upon this lovely land ;

See how the clouds yon hills enfold,
Turning their purple into gold !

For the sun's last light makes all things bright
Save you, the captive band.

Is not the earth around ye fair ?

And do your hearts desire to die,
Nor breathe once more the gladsome air,
When morning paints the sky ?

A precious thing is the light of day,
And life should not be flung away ;

Say, would ye be on the green earth free ?
Pine ye for liberty ?

Free shall ye be, by a Sultan's word,
A word that ne'er was broken yet,
Take ye but Allah for your Lord,
And bow to Mahomet.

Your trusty swords I will restore,
Your heads shall wear the helm once more,
By the Moslem band who rule this land
Ye shall be as brethren met.

Refuse—yon scimiters are keen—

A stern and speedy death is near ! ”

Full awful where those words, I ween ;
They thrill'd against the ear !

What did that true band reply ?

Every knight kneel'd down to die,
For they look'd on the sea of Galilee,

And one word they answer'd—“ *Here ?* ”

Here, should the brave deny their God ?

Here, should the true forsake their faith ?

Here, where the living footsteps trod
Of Him they own'd in death ?

Here, where the silent earth and sea
Bare witness to the Deity ?

There was not a heart would from Christ depart
By blue Genesareth !

So, one by one, they kneel'd and died,

That band of heroes and of saints,
And the deep, dark stain of a crimson tide
The hill's lone greenness taints.

The hurrying work of death was done
Ere in the pure wave sank the sun,
And the twilight air was full of prayer,
But not of weak complaints.

Oh, many tears, ye brave and true,
Oh, many tears for those were shed
Whose corpses by the waters blue
Lay piled—unhonour'd dead !

Shrined in many a bleeding heart,
Never did their name depart !
And heaven's own light for many a night
Play'd round each sleeping head.

But a purer light than that whose ray
Around their tombless corpses shone,
Was kindled in hearts far away

By the deed which they had done !
And if the warriors' tempted faith
Grew feeble in the hour of death,
"Remember," they cried, "how the Templars died,
And the true knights of St John !"

The Brethren of Port Royal.

[The Jansenist settlement at Port Royal was composed of men whose demeanour and occupations realized the purest idea of a monastic life that ever presented itself to the mind of a religious enthusiast. The convent was governed by the celebrated Mère Angélique, and among the brethren were to be counted some of the noblest names in France. When the wars of the Fronde first broke out, De Sericour, one of the brethren, and, like many of his companions, formerly a knight and a warrior, cast aside his cowl, and laid hand on his sword. His example was speedily followed by the others; in a few moments the quiet valley was converted into a camp—the peaceful band of monks became a gallant and eager army. Fortifications were commenced; and the work of disciplining forces, not indeed inexperienced, but forgetful, through long disuse, of their former soul-stirring experience, was entrusted to De Sericour. In the midst of these warlike preparations, De Sacy, another of their number, and a relation of the impetuous De Sericour, recalled to the minds of the brethren their vow and sacred profession. In an instant their arms were cast aside, the note of the trumpet was exchanged for the solemn sound of the organ and the plaintive tones of the penitential psalm; and the valley, with its singular inhabitants, was restored to the calm and peace of its original aspect, in a space of time yet shorter than that which had sufficed for the first change.]

UPON St Mary's night
 Was met a holy band,
 In prayer and fasting to unite
 For their afflicted land;
 The moon shone clear and pale
 Upon the house of prayer,
 And the solemn organ-tones did sail
 Along the steadfast air.
 Upon a kneeling crowd
 That silver radiance shone,
 With hearts upraised and faces bow'd
 At God's eternal throne;
 And strange was it to see,
 As ye pass'd their ranks along,
 The difference and the unity
 Of that assembled throng.

Some were in youth's first bloom,
And some in manhood's prime,
Some verging on the open tomb,
And waiting God's good time ;
From ploughing summer's earth
Some to those walls were come,
And the high stamp of noble birth
Was on the brows of some.

But a holy band they were,—
One Lord, one faith, one heart,
A brotherhood of praise and prayer,
From the vain world apart :
Beneath war's iron rod
Their groaning land was cast ;
But in simple toils, and serving God,
Their quiet days they past.

Hard must it be to bow
Beneath that steadfast chain,
Though no irrevocable vow
Their willing hearts restrain.
Seest thou yon kneeler there ?
Ay, mark him well—the hand
Now clasp'd in penitential prayer
Once shook the knightly brand.

Does not that govern'd eye
Full many a story tell
Of struggle, strife, and victory,
Won in his narrow cell ;
The world's vain lore unlearn'd,
Its vainer hopes unfelt ?—
But, ah, how the warrior-heart hath burn'd
Beneath that iron belt !

Long, long he strove to lift
His spirit with the psalm,

Pleading and striving for the gift
 Of patience, deep and calm ;
 But as upon the air
 Those soaring accents float,
 There blended with the voice of prayer
 One distant trumpet note.

Like to the purple gloom
 Of storm-clouds on the sea,
 When earth is silent as the tomb,
 And heaven frowns terribly,
 Was the darkness that o'erspread
 That soldier-hermit's brow :
 His eye is proud, his cheek is red—
 He's all the warrior now !

Like to the sudden light
 Upon those storm-clouds breaking,
 When tempest rushes on the night,
 And hurricanes are waking,
 Was the spirit that *return'd*
 To his uplifted eye,—
 A fire long stifled, but which burn'd
 On its old hearth eagerly.

“Up, up !” he cried, “awake !
 Gather for France—for France !
 For cowl, and staff, and crosier, take
 The helmet and the lance !
 We see our country bleed,
 We hear the trumpet's tone,
 And how should we need a chief to lead ?—
 Our hearts shall lead us on !
 Our joyous land of France,
 Our lovely, our adored,
 Shall she———advance, my friends, advance !—
 I cannot speak the word.

This is holy war,
 Good angels on us smile ;
Soldiers we were, and monks we are,
 But Frenchmen all the while !
And our hands are now unbound,
 And we all are knights once more,
And the old forgotten cry shall sound,
 ‘ God and De Sericour ! ’ ”
Their hearts took up that cry ;
 And, like a lion’s roar,
The long aisles echo thunderingly,
 “ God and De Sericour ! ”
And the anthem died away,
 And the sounds of prayer were lost :
The monks and the beadsmen, where are they ?—
 Ye see an armèd host !
An armèd host ye see ;
 For, swift as light or thought,
Some of its ancient panoply
 Each eager hand hath caught.
Lances were glimmering then,
 And faded banners streaming,
And on the brows of aged men
 Were helmets faintly gleaming,
But dimm’d with many a stain,
 For the rust had eaten through them,
But the spirits were themselves again,
 And how should man subdue them ?
They march into the field,
 De Sericour the first ;
Oh, as his hand resumed the shield,
 Seem’d that his heart would burst !
Beneath the moon’s pale lamp
 War’s business was begun,

And the quiet vale became a camp
Ere rose the morning sun.
And the work of war went on,
There was hurrying to and fro,
The trumpet gave its cheering tone,
"Set forward on the foe!"
How were their spirits stirr'd,
All panting to begin!—
But lo, a calm, still voice is heard—
It warneth them of sin!
Of Christian love and hope,
Of their adopted law,
Forbidding strife with strife to cope,
It speaks in holy awe;
It calls them to submit
To that accustom'd yoke,
And to weep that they rejected it,—
It was De Sacy spoke.
Mutely they hear the word,
And mutely all obey;
Cuirass, and lance, and helm, and sword,
At once are flung away;
And the noon-tide sun shines bright
Upon an alter'd scene,
The vale lies placid in its light
As it hath ever been!
Gone—like an April gleam
When storms are gathering fast!
It is like waking from a dream!
That wondrous change hath past.
And the daily toils went on,
As if they ne'er had ceased,
And the organ with its stately tone
Gave answer to the priest.

Who first did from him cast
 The weapon that he wore ?
 'Twas he whom man would name the last—
 It was De Sericour !
 His lofty head is bow'd
 'Neath a heavier weight than years,
 The eye that was so brightly proud
 Is quench'd in sudden tears !
 And penitence resumes
 Her intermitted sway,
 And swift forgetfulness entombs
 The deeds of that bright day.
 Ah, no ! The *thought* can be
 From the deep heart banish'd never ;
 'Twas the captive's glimpse of liberty,
 Seen once and lost for ever !
 Scorn we a heart like his,
 At God's own footstool laid ?
 Forget not that of stuff like this
 Martyrs and saints were made !
 But our words are bold and free,
 We judge, decide, condemn—
 Ah, God forgive us !—what are *we*
 That we should sentence *them* ?

The How of Cortes.

WORD was brought where Cortes lay
 On the shores of Coronzel,
 That, pent from the blessed light of day
 And the free breath of generous air,
 A band of Christians captive were
 In the hands of the Indians fell.

Up rose in wrath that leader brave,
 And sware by holy cross,
 Never to rest by land or wave
 Till he had loosed each captive's chain ;
 So did his gallant heart disdain
 Death, danger, woe, or loss.

Eight weary days and nights he stay'd
 On the shores of Coronzel ;
 Far and wide his messengers stray'd,
 Oft they went and oft return'd,
 But nought of that sad band they learn'd
 In the hands of the Indians fell.

And all this while the wind was foul,
 The sky was stern and dark,
 Dark as a despot's threatening scowl !
 But on the ninth bright morning, lo,
 The wind blows fair for Mexico,
 Wooing each idle bark.

The skies are lucid, clear, and smooth,
 As a sleeping infant's cheek,
 The breeze is like the voice of youth,
 The sea is like a maiden's smile,
 Sparkling and gay, yet shy the while,
 On lips afraid to speak.

Sighing o'er dreams of fame withheld,
 Stood Cortes on the shore,
 His fiery heart within him swell'd
 When he saw his good ships slothfully
 Cradled on that rocking sea,—
 “ Unmoor ! ” he cried, “ unmoor !

A weary time have we tarried now,
 But the fruitless search is o'er ”
 (Ah, couldst thou thus forget thy vow ?)—

“ ’Twere sin to lose this favouring breeze,
 ’Twere shame to scorn these courteous seas ;
 Unmoor, my men, unmoor ! ”

Merrily rustled each flapping sail
 Unfurling as it met
 The soft caress of the buoyant gale ;
 And merrily shouted the seamen brave
 As their light barks crested each dancing wave,
 And the vow they all forget !

But scarce a league did that gay band sail
 Ere the sky grew overcast,
 And the good ships reel’d in the clashing hail ;
 “ Courage, my hearts ! ” quoth Cortes then,
 “ It shall never be said that Spanish men
 Were scared by an adverse blast ! ”

The heavens grew blacker as he spoke,
 And their course they could not keep
 Save for the flashes blue that broke
 Like serpents of fire from the sable sky,
 While they hear the shrill wind’s startled cry,
 And the roar of the stormy deep.

But the leader’s voice through wind and wave
 Rose calm, and clear, and bold ;
 “ Hurrah, my mates ! the storm we brave !
 Stand to your posts like men ! ” But hark !
 A cry of terror shakes the bark,
 “ There’s water in the hold ! ”

And to and fro on the slippery deck,
 And up and down the stair,
 Came faces full of woe and wreck,
 With staring eye and whiten’d lip
 Hurrying about the fated ship
 In purposeless despair !

“ Put back, put back to Coronzel ! ”
Cried the chief in sudden awe,
“ Put back, put back,—we did not well ! ”
For his mighty heart was humbled now,
And he bethought him of his vow,
And the hand of God he saw.

Then labouring in that dreadful sea,
Through many an hour of fear,
The groaning bark moved doubtfully—
Oh, weary men, but glad they were
When they felt the land-breeze stir their hair,
And they saw the coast appear !

Bold Cortes stood upon the shore
When morning glimmer'd bright ;
The frenzy of the storm was o'er,
And he saw the calm blue waters lie
Under a cloudless canopy,
Curling in waves of light.

A boat, a boat from Yucatan !
It sprang before the wind ;
And thence there stepp'd a white-hair'd man !
But not from age that hue of snow ;
He walk'd with wavering steps and slow,
Like one whose eyes were blind.

Eager around his path they crowd,
In wild but earnest glee ;
They clasp his hand, they shout aloud ;
For this was one of that sad throng,
Pining 'mid pitiless Indians long,
And now at last set free.

But a wondering, troubled countenance
That white-hair'd stranger's seems,
Like a young child's uncertain glance

When reason dawns upon its heart,
 Not understood as yet, but part
 Of vague departing dreams.

“Come I to Christian men?” he said,
 In eager tones but weak;
 “Eight years have blanch’d this weary head,
 And all the time I have not heard
 The sound of one familiar word!
 If ye be Christians, speak!

My brethren were around me slain,
 And I was spared alone;
 But I have suffer’d want and pain,
 A captive’s grief, an exile’s woe;
 What marvel that this early snow
 Upon my head is strown?

A humble priest of God am I,
 And I have kept my vow;
 I saw, in speechless agony,
 All that I loved on earth depart,
 And pray’d but for a stainless heart:
 Thank God, I have it now!”

Around that holy man they stood,
 A hush’d and reverent band;
 They wept, those soldiers stern and rude,
 As long-unwonted words he spake,
 And blest them all for Jesus’ sake,
 Lifting his wasted hand.

Strangely and long did Cortes gaze
 Into that stranger’s eyes;
 They had been friends in earlier days,
 And now his lips half doubting frame
 A dear but unfamiliar name,—
 Link’d to long memories!

And Cortes seems a boy again,
 Life's guilty paths unknown ;
 For many a change and many a stain
 Have fallen upon him since they met ;
 Much hath his hand with blood been wet,
 And hard his heart hath grown.

All laden with the sins of years,
 He kneels upon the sod ;
 He kneels and weeps ! oh, precious tears !
 The good man bends beside him there ;
 And well we know a righteous prayer
 Avaieth much with God !

The Enemies.

[The story on which the following ballad is founded is related in
 Mrs Jameson's "Lives of Female Sovereigns."]

PART I.

OH, fair was Countess Isadoure,
 The Ladye of Leòn,
 And she unto her highest tower,
 With all her maids, is gone ;
 A veil of lace, in modest grace,
 Was wrapt her brow around ;
 Her vesture fair of satin rare
 Swept on the stony ground.

She spake unto her wardour good :
 " Now, wardour, tell thou me
 How many years thou here hast stood
 To watch the far countree."

The wardour stout, he straight spake out :

“ Sweet ladye, there have been,
Since first I clombe this lofty dome,
Methinks full years fifteen.

And every night, and every morn,
Noontide and eve the same,
I still was wont to wind my horn,
For still a stranger came ;
Now, twice three days are fully past,
I gazed both far and wide,
Nor have I wound a single blast,
Nor have I aught espied.”

The ladye dried her pearly tears,
That flow'd like summer rain :
“ Ah, wardour, spare a woman's fears,
Go up yet once again !
Perchance thine eye my lord may spy
Far in the distant west,
For yestere'en he should have been
Enfolded to this breast.”

The wardour clombe the weary stair,
And long and closely gazed ;
At last his glad shout rent the air,—
“ Hurrah ! Saint James be praised !
I see a knight—the glimmering light
Just glances from his shield ;
His pace is slow, his plume droops low—
He comes from a foughten field.”

Then joyful was that ladye bright
With measureless content,
And forth to meet the coming knight
In eager haste she went.
“ Now, maidens mine, bring food and wine,
And spread the festal board ;

Soft music bring, rich incense fling,
To welcome back my lord."

She placed her on a palfrey good,
As well beseem'd her state,
And forth she rode in mirthful mood
Down to the castle-gate :

" Now, maidens, stay your pace, I pray,
And let us gladly wait
Till yonder knight shall here alight
By his own castle-gate."

They had not stay'd an hour's brief space
Beneath that sinking sun,
When, lo, with stern and darken'd face
That stranger knight came on ;
The lady saw his brow of awe,
And mark'd his greeting word,
Then veil'd her eyes in wild surprise,
And shriek'd, " 'Tis not my lord ! "

His mien was sad, his crest defaced,
His mail besprent with gore,
He lighted off his steed in haste,
Hard by the castle-door ;
He flung aside his helm of pride,
He bent his forehead low,
And scarcely knew that war's red dew
Fell trickling from his brow.

" Ah, ladye" (thus the stranger said),
" Ill tidings must I tell ;
Your lord will surely lose his head
Before the matin-bell.

His gallant host are slain and lost,
His friends are all dispersed ;
The cruel Moor is at his door :
Yet is not this the worst !

Pent in Alhama's fort he lies,
Bereft of every hope ;
In vain his utmost strength he tries
With triple force to cope ;
The Moor hath sworn, ere break of morn
The fortress shall be won,
And he will hang in ruthless scorn
Its valiant garrison.

Your lord commends him to your love,
And prays, in piteous kind,
That ere the morrow shine above,
Some succour thou may'st find.
He bade me tell, that, if he fell,
Ere life's last pang were o'er"—
Oh, cease thy tale, thou warrior pale !
The ladye hears no more !

Then loud her maidens wail and weep,
And mourn so sad an hour,
They lift her up in deathful sleep,
They bear her to her bower ;
And loyal grief for their good chief
Spreads far on every part,
Through all Leòn there is not one
But bears a heavy heart.

PART II.

In proud Medina's castle fair
The rosy wine flows bright,
For proud Medina's valiant heir
Brings home his bride to-night.
Mirth smiles on every lip, and shines
In every gleaming eye,

And the sound of merry laughter joins
 With lutes and minstrelsy.
Full many a knight of high degree
 Sate at Medina's board,
But the morning-star of chivalry
 Was he, their stately lord.
The haughtiest monarchs bow'd them down
 In reverence of his fame,
And the trumpet-tones of loud renown
 Were weary of his name.
The health pass'd joyously about
 That table fair and wide,
And every guest with eager shout
 Gave honour to the bride.
The old hall rang to their joyous peal ;—
 While, on its sides so high,
The clattering sound of the shaken steel
 Gave faint but stern reply !
Was that the sound of lance or sword
 'Gainst the mailèd hauberk ringing,
Which circles above the festive board,
 And the lordly banners swinging ?
Lo, every lip forsakes the cup !
Lo, every knight starts breathless up !
 For wheeling around
 That ancient hall,
 Came the murmuring sound
 Of a trumpet-call,—
Sinking and swelling, slow and soft,
And lost in the night-wind's whistle oft.
It ceased, that low and fitful sound,
 It died on the evening gale,
And the knights they all gazed grimly round,
 And the ladies all wax'd pale ;

The baron bold was first to break

The silence of his hall :

“ What may this bode ? ”—’twas thus he spake—

“ Now rede me, warriors all.”

Then up spake Guzman of Mindore—

A holy monk was he—

“ ’Tis the sound,” quoth he, “ of the coming Moor ;

Oh, let us turn and flee ! ”

Him answer’d straight Sir Leoline,

A true and stalwart knight,

“ ’Tis the sound of the coming Moor, I ween ,

Let us go forth and fight.”

Then every gauntlet sought its sword

With a quick and friendly greeting,

And a clash arose at the festive board,

But not of goblets meeting.

Up sprang each knight ; like a beam of light

Forth flash’d each trenchant blade,

And the backward start of the quivering sheath

A stirring answer made—

When, lo, on the breeze again was borne

The cadence wild of that echoing horn !

And see, where up the hall proceeds

A sad yet stately group ;

A ladye, clad in mourning weeds,

Is foremost of the troop.

Her tearful eyes betray her grief,

Her mien shows her degree ;

And forward to the wondering chief

She steps right gracefully.

She wrung her hands, and down she kneel’d,

So sorrowful, so fair,

That heart must have been triply steel’d

That could resist her prayer.

Scarce have her trembling lips the power
 Their suppliant words to frame,
 She sinks upon the marble floor,
 Murmuring her husband's name !

Her husband's name !—unwelcome sound
 In proud Medina's ears :

A wrathful whisper circles round
 The band of knights and peers ;
 From lip to lip is past the word,
 In tones of fierce rebuke,
 " Is it the wife of Cadiz' lord
 Who seeks Medina's duke ? "

Alas, that deadly feud should be
 Between two hearts so brave and free !
 Alas, that long ancestral hate
 Such kindred souls should separate !

Up rose that ladye at the word,
 And spake with queenly brow :
 " It *is* the wife of Cadiz' lord
 Who seeks Medina now !

I come to tell my husband's plight,—
 A captive doom'd is he ;
 And I charge thee as a Christian knight
 Go forth and set him free !

Pent in Alhama's fort he lies,
 Bereft of every hope ;
 In vain his utmost strength he tries
 With triple force to cope ;
 The Moor hath sworn, ere break of morn
 The fortress shall be won,
 And he will hang in ruthless scorn
 Its valiant garrison.

Then canst thou, wilt thou, not forget
 The stormy words when last ye met ? "

" Say rather, will I not contemn
 The heart that *could* remember them ?
 Fear nothing, gentle ladye,—I
 Am slave to love and chivalry.
 Let each who keeps his honour bright
 And holds his conscience free,
 Let each who boasts the name of knight,
 Forward and follow me ! "
 He spake, and shook his flashing sword,
 Then darted from the festal board.

Him follow'd Guzman of Mindore
 With words of counsel wise :
 " Oh, cross not thou thy castle-door
 On such a mad emprise !
 Recall, recall thy hasty word,
 Nor set false Cadiz free ! "
 But out then spoke that generous lord,
 " He is mine enemy ! "

And never another word spoke he,
 But on his steed he sprang ;
 And forth he rode right joyously,
 As though for his wedding revelry
 The merry church-bells rang :
 O glorious time, and noble race,
 Where hate to honour thus gave place !

Behind him then his vassals crowd
 In legions bold and bright,
 The prancing of their coursers proud,
 It was a stately sight ;
 And the music of their eager swords,
 In warlike fury clashing,
 Was a stirring sound, like the wild rebound
 Of waves o'er dark rocks dashing.

Like the torrent plunging from the rock,
Or the lightning from the skies,
So roll'd the thunder of their shock
Against their enemies !
How should a mortal foe resist
The charge of such a band ?
They scatter'd like an April mist
Cleft by the sun-god's hand !

Oh, brightly on Alhama's fort
The morning sun was beaming,
Where many a chief of lordly port
Stood in his armour gleaming ;
Fair is the scene its towers disclose
In their high banquet-hall ;
But the first embrace of those two foes
Was a fairer sight than all !

Oh, fast through all the Spanish land
That victory was told,
Right gladsome was King Ferdinand,
Right gay his warriors bold ;
From lip to lip the bright tale darts,
All laud the high emprise ;
But the union of those generous hearts
Was dear in God's own eyes !

Gustavus and Christine.

[Gustavus Adolphus sacrificed his passion for the beautiful Christine to the welfare of his country ; but that the feeling was subdued, not forgotten, seems to be proved (if, indeed, it require proof) by the touching circumstance of his giving her name to his first-born daughter.]

THE lengthening shades of rock and steep
 Along the level waters creep,
 And yonder mountain's crest of snows,
 Transparent in the sunset grows ;
 Ere yet Night's gradual hand unroll
 The wonders of her starry scroll—
 Ere yet the waves that blush and burn
 To lines of liquid moonlight turn,—
 Upon that lone and silent shore
 The lovers meet—to meet no more.

Full strangely did the blended light
 Of parting day and coming night
 Shine on each pallid face, to show
 How joy was passing into woe :
 Even then the hero's lofty will
 Was master of his anguish still ;
 Calmly—as one who uttereth
 The last few solemn words of death—
 He speaks ; with drooping head she hears,
 And still makes answer by her tears.

“ Christine, it is not ours to part
 Plucking fond memories from the heart,
 Nor feebly o'er our griefs to brood
 In luxury of solitude ;
 We go, in patience and in prayer
 Our daily cross apart to bear ;

Yet, through the struggle and the strife,
The lengthen'd bitterness of life,
My soul's unfailing balm shall be,
The thought of all thou wast to me.

Of all thou shalt be ! To my dreams
The past for ever present seems.
Oh, could that happy magic last,
And make the present seem the past !
In vain ! They shine no more for me,
Those eyes of readiest sympathy,
Whose tears could turn my grief to bliss,
And soften every pang—save this.”
He paused ; his glance, resolved and proud,
Betray'd a dimness and a cloud.

Kneeling, she hid her face, and strove
To frame the words, “ Forget me, love ! ”
Her trembling hands he clasp'd : “ Oh, cease !
Dream not forgetfulness were peace ;
Years shall not shadow from mine eyes
One of their bright, sad memories !
Still let my heart, though wrung and riven,
Reflect how nobly it was given ;
Still guard its secrets as a shrine
Worthy of thee—and only thine.

But *thou*, Christine ? I dare not gaze
On the slow current of thy days ;
No breeze to stir, no beam to warm,
Remote from sunshine as from storm.
How will that heart, fresh, bounding, young,
By grief's remorseless clasp be wrung !
Oh, weeping much, and suffering long,
Patient in woe, in weakness strong,
Thou goest a captive's life to lead,
And death were liberty indeed !

God arm thee with endurance ! Yet
 Thou mayst do all things but forget.
 Thy pure and lonely love must be
 Firm to sustain itself and thee—
 Shining like yonder planet's light,
 Which brightens with the deepening night ;
 And still, whene'er the voice of fame
 Breathes proudly my remember'd name,
 Think—while thou weapest—think, ' In this
 Nor small nor slight my portion is.'

Farewell ! Oh, vainest word that e'er
 Fell from the weakness of despair !
 Nor seas, nor worlds, nor fates have power
 To sever hearts for one brief hour."'
 Grief yields to love ; her streaming eyes
 She lifts, and with a *smile* replies.

* * * * *

The sea hath lost its edge of gold,
 The mountain-crest gleams white and cold,
 The silver moon shines pale on one
 Who kneels and weeps—he is alone !





NOTES.

In these Notes I do not attempt to give anything like a narrative of events connected with the subjects of the Ballads, but simply to explain, and that as briefly as possible, such points as may be supposed to require elucidation for my younger readers, in the hope that they may be induced to drink deeply for themselves of the fountains which they are here but invited to taste.

CONQUEST OF ENGLAND. P. I.

For the details of this, and of many other Ballads, I am indebted to Miss Strickland's valuable and interesting *Lives of the Queens of England*, to which I beg, once for all, to acknowledge my frequent obligations.

"But Saxon Harold," &c.

I take this opportunity of correcting a blunder, noticed by a critic in *Bentley's Miscellany*. The "right of a sovereign to name his successor," though acknowledged even in the days of Queen Bess, never extended so far as to enable him to will away his kingdom to a foreigner. Nevertheless, we cannot acquit Harold

of bad faith in swearing allegiance to William. I am quite aware that the historical knowledge displayed in these pages is neither profound nor extensive ; but I am anxious that it should be correct ; and shall therefore feel obliged to those who may point out errors or inaccuracies.

“ *And their spears shine bright as the stars of night.*”

It is bad policy to remind my readers of Byron’s exquisite line—

“ And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea ;”

but I suppose that, were I to omit such reference, I should incur the charge of plagiarism.

“ *’Tis the Duckess Matilda,*” &c.

Matilda, daughter to Baldwin V., surnamed the Gentle Earl of Flanders. She was married to William the Conqueror in the year 1052. She was a woman of remarkable beauty, great talents, and strong affections ; and the only serious stain upon her character is the unworthy vengeance which she took against Brihtric Meaw, a Saxon noble, to whom she was attached, and by whom she was slighted in early youth. The warm affection between herself and the Conqueror subsisted unimpaired throughout the whole of their wedded life ; and history offers us few tales of deeper pathos than that of the rebellion of her first-born, Robert—her own bitter struggles between a mother’s love and a wife’s duty—the touching and passionate reproaches of the injured husband and father—and eventually the death of the heart-broken Matilda, worn out by hopeless sorrow ; a fitting end for this domestic tragedy. The reader is again referred to Miss Strickland’s *Lives of the Queens of England*.

THE NEW FOREST. P. 9.

“It was the ruthless Conqueror.”

I am not sorry for this opportunity of exhibiting the darker side of the character of William I., lest it should be supposed by any that I wished to hold him up as a specimen of knightly virtues. His claims to such a character are destroyed by the recklessness and fierceness of his tyranny. That he was sensible, however, of his offences against the requirements of that spirit of chivalry, which, in many instances, it was his pride to obey, is sufficiently shown by his confessions on his death-bed. He expressed the bitterest remorse for his acts of cruelty and oppression, especially for the desolation of that portion of Hampshire called the New Forest; ordered large sums to be distributed to the poor, and applied to the erection of churches; set at liberty all Saxons whom he had retained in imprisonment; and finally, speaking of the inheritance of the crown of England, declared “that he had so misused that fair and beautiful land, that he dared not appoint a successor to it, but left the disposal of that matter in the hands of God.”

THE KNIGHTING OF COUNT GEOFFREY OF ANJOU. P. 12.

“That name Count Geoffrey did first assume.”

Such is the account of the origin of the name Plantagenet given by French chroniclers. It is, however, a matter of dispute whether the honour belongs to Count Geoffrey.

"The Empress Matilda," &c.

She was the daughter of Henry I. by his wife Matilda of Scotland, and was espoused at the early age of five years to Henry V., emperor of Germany, then forty years old. She was the first female claimant to the sovereignty of England; and from her, according to Miss Strickland, the title of our present gracious Queen is derived. Left a widow in 1125, she was betrothed to Count Geoffrey of Anjou two years afterwards; but their marriage proved most unhappy, having been concluded against her will by the authority of her father. She was haughty, ambitious, and impetuous, though not destitute of talents nor of the warmth of heart which is generally supposed to accompany heat of temper. The following reign, which historians have agreed to call that of Stephen, was almost entirely occupied by a struggle for the crown between that prince and the Empress Matilda, whose son, Henry II., finally succeeded to the throne: thus virtually proving the validity of his mother's claims, though in the singular contract between himself and Stephen he is said to be adopted "as son and successor to that prince by hereditary right."

"Bear thou this blow," &c.

Such were the words which frequently accompanied the *acolade*, or stroke on the shoulder, by which knighthood was conferred. It was customary at the conclusion of the ceremony for the new-made knight, or novice, as he was called, to mount his horse, and show himself in the streets of the city, amid the shouts of the populace and acclamations of the heralds.

"Two cuisses of steel I give to thee."

It was impossible to include in the ballad an entire list of the gifts presented by King Henry as sponsor to Count Geoffrey,

his godson in arms. Miss Strickland thus enumerates them: "A Spanish steed, a steel coat of mail, cuisses of double proof against sword and arrow, spurs of gold, a scutcheon adorned with golden lions, a helmet enriched with jewels, a lance of ash, with a Poitiers head, and a sword made by Gallard, the most famous of the ancient armourers." The oration here addressed by King Henry to the count is strictly in keeping with the customs of knighthood, which required that the novice should be solemnly instructed in his future duties either by the godfather who dubbed him knight, or the bishop whose office it was to consecrate his sword.

Count Geoffrey was valiant and learned, handsome in person and refined in deportment. Altogether it would be difficult to select a more interesting hero of the ceremony of knighthood.

THE ENGLISH MERCHANT AND THE SARACEN LADY. P. 19.

It was common for merchants to accompany the great body of Crusaders in their eastern progress, in the hope of opening a trade with the Syrians for many rich and valuable commodities unknown or difficult to be procured in Europe.

"Their first-born son was a priest of power."

I need scarcely say, that the famous Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Henry II., is the personage to whom I here allude. With his name most of my readers must be familiar, although the many conflicting views taken of his character and history render it somewhat difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of either. It would be idle to discuss such questions here, or to attempt to compress, within the narrow limits of these pages, a narrative so full of important and in-

teresting events. For this I must refer my readers to the *History of the Early English Church*, by the Rev. Edward Churton—a work with which I am not myself acquainted, but which is said to contain a detailed and accurate account of the period to which I refer.

EARL STRONGBOW. P. 26.

The invasion of Ireland by Richard de Clare, Earl of Pembroke, surnamed Strongbow, in the reign of Henry II., is rather a romance than a history. He was invited to enter the green isle by Dermot, one of its kings, who had been expelled by his fellows for repeated treachery. Strongbow fell in love with Eva, the beautiful daughter of this worthless prince, married her, and afterwards rapidly conquered the island. The conquest was, of course, attended by many adventures, and interrupted by some reverses, among which I have selected one, which seemed to me peculiarly interesting, as the theme of the present ballad. Fitzstephen was a pennyless knight, who, however, attained to such honour by his deeds of prowess during the invasion, that he was finally rewarded by the hand of the fair Basilia, sister to the Earl of Pembroke, to whom he had long been hopelessly attached. He is honourably distinguished from his companions by his gentleness and generosity towards his vanquished foes. It is said that the harbour of Dublin was defended by two towers, respectively denominated Castle Hook and Castle Crook. When Earl Strongbow's fleet came in sight of shore, he pronounced the following oracular words, "We will take the city by Hook or by Crook;" and this is supposed to be the origin of the proverbial expression of getting anything by hook or by crook. It must, however, be observed that this explanation only substitutes one difficulty for another, as no satisfactory reason is suggested for

the singular taste of the Irish in giving two such unaccountable names to their castles.

THE CAPTIVITY OF CŒUR DE LION. P. 30.

“The lord of France’s lovely land.”

Philip Augustus, king of France, was one of the principal chiefs of the crusade. Many were the differences which arose between him and the impetuous Richard; not unnaturally, for their characters were as dissimilar as those respectively assumed by the leader of a forlorn hope and the contriver of a mine. In 1191 Philip abandoned the crusade, not without subjecting himself to a bitter reproach from his lion-hearted colleague, who might well be doubtful of receiving a welcome in France when he also was reluctantly compelled to return. “If Philip think,” cried the King of England, “that a long residence here will be fatal to him, let him go, and cover his kingdom with shame!”—MACKINTOSH’S *Hist. of England*.

“And Austria’s duke.”

Leopold, duke of Austria, whose character, as drawn by Sir W. Scott in his exquisite romance *The Talisman*, exactly corresponds with the brief description here given. He appears to have suffered from an incessant and feverish desire to maintain his own dignity, the claims of which were frequently overlooked or despised by the energetic and disdainful Richard. At Ascalon, where the Duke refused to work in the trenches wherein Cœur de Lion himself laboured like a common soldier, it is said that the angry monarch spurned him with his foot.

THE COMPLAINT OF CŒUR DE LION. P. 33.

The lays composed by this monarch form no unfavourable specimens of Provençal poetry. They are little known, but ought not to be omitted in our estimate of his character; and are in themselves a sufficient evidence of his vast superiority to the coarse and savage Rufus, to whom Miss Strickland has compared him.

“Thy land, Jerusalem.”

This expression is intended to designate the Holy Land, of which Jerusalem was the capital. Cœur de Lion never obtained entrance within the walls of Jerusalem; and when, to his bitter grief, and in spite of his prodigious efforts, the crusade was finally abandoned, and he was led to the summit of a neighbouring hill to take his first and last look of the Holy City, the high-souled warrior covered his face with his shield, to hide the tears which deep sorrow and bitter shame wrung from the lion heart.

“Specious Burgundy.”

The jealousy of Richard's superior prowess felt by the Duke of Burgundy is supposed to have been chiefly instrumental in procuring the final abandonment of the crusade.

 THE LAY OF THE FEARLESS DE COURCY. P. 41.

Several members of the family of De Courcy accompanied Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, in his invasion of Ireland in 1169-70, and the individual who is the hero of our ballad conquered the province of Ulster.

“The beautiful queen.”

The story of this lovely and high-spirited princess is full of deep and romantic interest. She was betrothed ere she had attained the age of fifteen years to Hugh of Lusignan, Count de la Marche, one of the most renowned warriors of his time. King John, captivated by her surpassing beauty, prevailed on her parents to break off the marriage, and espoused her himself. At first her childish spirit was dazzled and enchanted by the brilliancy of her destiny; but she soon recoiled in horror from the baseness of its partner, and remembered with bitter repentance the gallant knight whom she had been induced to abandon. The indignant Lusignan adopted the cause of Prince Arthur; but was taken prisoner by John, and subjected to the vilest indignities: indeed it is supposed that his life was only spared at the entreaty of the queen. Afterwards, when, having regained his liberty and proved himself a formidable antagonist, King John was desirous of obtaining him as an ally, the only condition of peace on which he insisted was, that the infant daughter of Isabella should be given to him in marriage. This request, which sufficiently attests the chivalrous devotion felt by Lusignan to the memory of his slighted affections, was granted; but when Isabella, being left a widow at thirty-four, proceeded to deliver her child into his charge, the force of their old and unforgotten attachment revived at once, and the name of the mother was speedily substituted in the bridal contract for that of her daughter. Nearly twenty years of misery and humiliation had not taught Isabella to bridle that ambitious spirit which had so misled her in her days of girlhood; and she eventually died of a broken heart, caused by the shame and scorn brought upon her husband and his family by the rash and rebellious wars in which her pride and vehemence had involved them. “She was a queen,” she said, when Lusignan was about to pay homage to his sovereign, “and she scorned to be the wife of any man who must kneel to another.”

THE PRINCE AND THE OUTLAW. P. 51.

“I am Adam de Gordon.”

Adam de Gordon was one of the last adherents of Simon de Montfort, whose daring and temporarily successful rebellion rendered troublous a great part of the reign of Henry III. In those days, when vast forests covered many parts of England, it was easy for an outlawed rebel, who was too proud to submit to authority, to conceal himself and live for years in a character strangely compounded of the hermit and the robber.

THE TOURNAMENT. P. 58.

In this ballad I have attempted to give an accurate description of the ceremonies attendant on a tournament; and I have selected the reign of Edward II. as belonging to the period during which these warlike diversions were at their zenith in England. I cannot touch on this subject without mentioning how much and how frequently this little book has been indebted to Mr. James's interesting historical works.

“When gleaming shields were hanging.”

Before the day of tourney it was customary for such knights as intended to appear in the lists to suspend their shields in the churches or abbeys of the nearest city. Heralds were stationed in the cloisters to hear and answer all questions concerning the knights. If any one, and especially if any female, had a complaint to prefer against one of the combatants, it was necessary to touch with a wand the shield of the offender: the herald then advanced, inquired into and registered the accusation; and if it

was subsequently decided by the judge of the field to be well-founded, the culprit was forbidden to appear in the lists. If he was bold enough to venture to the field after this prohibition, he was driven thence by the other knights, who struck him with their truncheons, and chased him from the place with every mark of contempt.

“Sir Piers de Gaveston.”

The unworthy and unfortunate favourite of Edward II. Reckless, insolent, and prodigal in the hour of his prosperity, he incurred the bitter hatred of the queen, whom he treated as a child, and the nobles, whom he slighted and ridiculed on every possible occasion. In 1312 he was beheaded, or rather murdered by his enemies, after the mockery of a trial, on the summit of Blacklow Hill, near Warwick. In memory of this outrage the place still bears the name of Gaveshead.

“The scowling gloom of Pembroke.”

In this stanza the names of those nobles who afterwards confederated against the life of Gaveston are enumerated. Their jealousy of him was conspicuously manifested at this tournament; and he, on his part, did not fail to meet it in his usual spirit of disdainful scoffing. He called Pembroke, who was lean and sallow of aspect, “Joseph the Jew;” Warwick, who foamed at the mouth when transported by passion, “the wild boar of Ardennes;” and Lancaster, who indulged an extravagant taste in his dress, “the stage-player.” Shortly after this public exhibition of his folly, he was temporarily dismissed at the instance of the queen and the nobility. At parting, Edward bestowed upon him all the jewels which he had received as love-tokens from his fair and royal bride. He was recalled in the fatal year of 1318.

“Fair Queen Isabelle.”

Isabelle of France, at that period a beautiful girl of fifteen. Her name has since become synonymous with everything that is darkest and most hateful in human nature. Faithless beyond the falsest of women, sanguinary and vindictive beyond the sternest of men, she united the worst vices of both sexes, and appears not to have possessed one redeeming virtue of either. Few ideas arise more forcibly on contemplating the splendour of this tournament, than that of the undeveloped germs of crime, horror, and misery which lay unsuspected beneath so fair and bright a surface.

“By the shining rein of a silver chain.”

A lady frequently led her warrior's steed to the barrier by a silver chain. Sometimes whole processions of knights were thus conducted to the lists.

“Like walls of glittering armour.”

When the two bodies of knights were drawn up in full array opposite to each other, a rope was stretched across the breasts of the horses, and held at either end by a herald. At the signal to charge, the rope was dropped, and the released and impatient steeds at once galloped forwards. The lists were generally marked out by wooden palings, above which were erected galleries for the spectators. The barrier was the entrance to the lists guarded by heralds, whose business it was to admit every knight who was deemed worthy of a place in the tournament.

THE SIX BURGHERS OF CALAIS. P. 70.

“Then spake Sir Walter Manny.”

Sir Walter, or Gaultier, de Manny, was a knight of matchless courage and spotless fame, who came over to England when quite a youth in the train of Queen Philippa. His deeds of valour, unstained by any darkening tinge of ferocity, are in themselves a romance, and might fill a volume.

THE DEATH OF KING JAMES I. P. 84.

James I., having incurred the hatred of his nobles by the unalterable resolution with which he restrained their excesses, and the stern uprightness with which he did justice between those tyrants of the soil and the unfortunate vassals whom they had been accustomed to oppress at their pleasure, was murdered by a band of traitors led by Sir Robert Grahame, at Perth, in the year 1437. So valiantly did he defend himself, that, although entirely unarmed, he succeeded in mastering two of the ruffians who attempted his life, and was only overcome at last by the assault of numbers. Sixteen wounds were found in his breast alone.

“Let Cameron and Montrose reply !”

The clan Cameron was distinguished for its devoted loyalty to the unfortunate Charles Edward. At the battle of Culloden many Camerons were slain, and Lochiel, the chief of the clan, was borne from the field dangerously wounded. The name of Montrose at once calls up before our eyes an image of everything that is high-minded, chivalrous, and loyal. He suffered death by sentence of parliament shortly after the murder of Charles I.

THE LAY OF SIR WILLIAM WALLACE. P. 89.

The name and story of Wallace must be familiar as a household word even to the very youngest of my readers. For the particulars of his heroic life I would refer to Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, or to the *Lives of Scottish Worthies* in the "Family Library."

BRUCE AND DOUGLAS. P. 91.

— "*undaunted Randolph,
Knight of the Perfect Wreath.*"

Randolph, Earl of Murray, one of the bravest of Bruce's followers, between whom and Douglas there was ever a generous rivalry in arms. Immediately before the battle of Bannockburn, the Bruce, perceiving that a body of English cavalry was attempting to force a passage into Stirling on the east, which quarter had been committed to the guardianship of Randolph, addressed that warrior in the words which have since become almost proverbial: "See, Randolph, a rose has fallen from your chaplet!" The sequel is well known; and the whole story is a beautiful specimen of the gallantry and generosity of Douglas and Randolph.

"*And valiant Grey, and stern La Haye.*"

Sir Andrew Grey was one of the two brave soldiers who, in company with Randolph, led the adventurous band who took Edinburgh Castle by night assault.

Gilbert de la Haye, Earl of Errol, was one of Bruce's most faithful adherents, and was created Lord High Constable of Scotland.

“And loyal Lennox there.”

Bruce, when flying for his life and in great jeopardy after the battle of Methven, was warmly received by the Earl of Lennox, who lamented with tears that he could not afford him any effectual assistance.

“Effaced and well atoned.”

Having been informed that this expression has been deemed objectionable by high authority, I beg to explain that I am here speaking not of any sins which Bruce committed against God, but of those of which he was guilty towards his country, and for which his after-life may well be considered a sufficient atonement.

“Methven’s field of blood and woes.”

The first battle fought by Bruce, after he took arms in behalf of his country, took place at Methven, near Perth, on the 19th of June, 1306, and was a total and disastrous defeat.

“Rachrin’s unforgotten coast.”

It was in the small and desolate island of Rachrin, on the coast of Ireland, that Bruce, a hunted and despairing exile, lay on his couch watching the efforts of a spider, and learning hope from the unwearied perseverance and final success of the insect. The story is too well known for repetition here.

“Arran’s isle by shady Clyde.”

Bruce landed in the island of Arran on his return to Scotland, and made his presence known to his friends, who were hunting in the woods, by winding a blast on his horn. “Yonder is the

king!" cried Douglas, when he heard the sound; "I know him by his manner of blowing."

"The midnight watch."

The story of the beacon on Turnberry Head is familiar to all readers of Sir Walter Scott's poetry—in other words, its notoriety is universal.

"The death of the traitor Comyn."

The Red Comyn was stabbed by Bruce in a burst of indignation at discovering that he was engaged in treasonable correspondence with the English. This fatal act was committed in the church of the Minorites at Dumfries; and it was in answer to Bruce's wild and broken exclamation, as he rushed in remorseful agitation from the desecrated sanctuary, "I doubt I hae slain the red Comyn," that Kirkpatrick uttered the celebrated words, "I will mak sicker;" and, hurrying to the spot, despatched the wounded man with his dagger.

*"Oh, lift me up, my comrades dear,
And let me look on Clyde!"*

The Bruce died in a castle on the banks of the Clyde; and one of his principal amusements, during the last days of his life, was to go out upon the river in a ship.

THE BRUCE'S HEART. P. 96.

"A valiant knight the casket bore."

Sir Simon Lockhard of Lee, whose name was changed to Lockhart in memory of his guardianship of the Bruce's heart.

GRIZZEL HUME. P. 101.

“ But he murmur'd Monmouth's name,” &c.

The Duke of Monmouth, a prince of generous and gentle temper, was the personal friend of Sir Patrick Hume. He was engaged in the Jerviswood plot, and was leader of that more dangerous enterprise organized in London, which cost the lives of Lord Russell and Algernon Sydney. Monmouth was beheaded in the reign of James II.

“ His daughter's first-born,” &c.

The Lady Grizzel Hume married the son and heir of that Baillie of Jerviswood whom we have before named as chief of the conspiracy in which Sir Patrick Hume was so deeply engaged.

“ Sedgemoor's field.”

Monmouth was taken prisoner at the battle of Sedgemoor.

“ Lone Inchinnan's fatal ford.”

The Duke of Argyle was commander-in-chief of an army which invaded Scotland about the year 1638, and in which Sir Patrick Hume held a high post. He was taken captive by the enemy's forces while endeavouring to cross the ford of Inchinnan.

THE CHOICE OF THE CHRISTIAN HEROES. P. 110.

*“ And heaven’s own light for many a night
Play’d round each sleeping head.”*

The death of these heroic captives occurred exactly as narrated in the ballad. It was believed that beams of light irradiated the unburied corpses during many successive nights. Let not this goodly battalion of the noble army of martyrs be ever forgotten.

THE VOW OF CORTES. P. 119.

The story on which this ballad is founded is related by Mr Prescott in his *History of Mexico*, which is throughout rich in romantic incident and picturesque narration. Aguilar, the aged captive whose liberation is here described, is included among the companions of Columbus, whose lives are related in a volume of the “Family Library,” supplementary to the biography of that great discoverer.

EXPLANATIONS OF SOME UNUSUAL WORDS

EMPLOYED IN THE PRECEDING PAGES.

BURGHER, or **burgess**.—A citizen ; that is, one who possesses the freedom of a city and the privileges connected therewith. The number and nature of these were, of course, dependent on the terms of the charter by which they were granted, and which was obtained either from the sovereign, or from the chief baron of the district in which the city was situated. The power of bearing arms, and the establishment of independent municipal governments, which continue to this day in the mayors and corporations of our towns, were the principal rights awarded to free cities. The first germ of citizenship in England is probably discoverable in the division of the country under Alfred into hundreds and tythings, in one of which every inhabitant was obliged to enrol himself under penalty of being treated as an outlaw. But in no country did the power of cities rise to so great a height as in Italy, where the most illustrious nobles were often subjected to the jurisdiction of the city near which they dwelt. The freedom of a city was frequently presented to a knight or a nobleman ; but though he thus virtually became a burgess, it is not customary to apply the name to any person of noble birth. Burghers were first summoned in England to attend parliament, which had hitherto been exclusively composed of nobles and ecclesiastics, by the revolted barons under Henry III. in 1265.

CASQUE.—A helmet ; which, in its fullest signification, consisted

of the steel cap covering the head, the beaver or beevor beneath the chin, and the movable vizor which defended the face. The beaver was also movable, and could be drawn up at pleasure to cover the chin and meet the lower rim of the vizor. The word beaver is often incorrectly used for vizor, or even for helmet.

CORBEL.—A carved projection from the wall of a building, on which the supports of the roof, or of a parapet beneath the roof, rested. No ornament which does not form the base of a support receives the name of corbel.

CUIRASS.—A breastplate; to which were generally added the gorget or collar around the throat, the back-piece, and brassets or sleeves, forming altogether a complete vest of steel covering the upper part of the body.

CUISSES.—Steel-plates covering the thighs. The legs were also defended by steel-plates, denominated greaves.

HAUBERK.—A shirt of mail. It extended from the throat to the thigh or knee, and was composed of links of interwoven steel, fitting more or less closely to the body, and so pliant as not to restrain the movements of the wearer. The hauberk was without sleeves; and the name is also applied to a shirt of mail composed of plates.

HERALD.—The office of herald in the times of chivalry comprehended far more than is implied by its modern and popular signification in tale or drama—that of a messenger from one armed power to another. The respect which was entertained for the character amounted almost to reverence; it was a mortal offence to strike a herald; and to assume the office without being really qualified for it, or to counterfeit without in fact possessing it, were crimes worthy of the deepest condemnation. The business of the herald, besides proficiency in that minute science of genealogies and armorial bearings from which the

name is derived, was, to receive from every knight a full and particular account of all his exploits, whether successful or inglorious, confirmed by oath. Every warrior, on his return from any expedition, was bound to make such a report to the heralds, who thus became depositories of all records of fame or of dishonour, and accurate judges of the respective merits of such knights as presented themselves in the field or the tourney. It was the part of the herald to receive all complaints, and answer all questions concerning the warriors who intended to tilt in the lists ; it was his part also to greet each knight as he presented himself before the barrier (see notes to the Tournament) with words of courtesy or of compliment, appropriate to the degree of his fame in arms, and to encourage the combatants by cries and shouts as they rode to the attack. Sir Walter Scott notices that the character of herald must have begun to deteriorate from its august dignity by the time of Louis XI. of France—that is to say, towards the middle of the 15th century ; because that prince ventured to despatch a counterfeit herald to Edward IV. of England ; and the act is recorded by the contemporary historian, Philip des Comines, without any expressions of horror or disgust.

KNIGHT.—In the days of chivalry the dignity of knighthood was conferred only on persons of noble birth, who had previously filled the offices of page and squire in due succession. The manner in which the ceremony was usually performed is described in the ballad of Count Geoffrey of Anjou. The virtues imposed upon a knight, namely, those of piety, courage, self-denial, generosity, honour, loyalty, courtesy, scrupulous adherence to truth, and indefatigable advocacy of the oppressed or helpless, were such as would grace and dignify our own enlightened days ; and it may certainly be questioned whether they are more universally practised now than they were of old. At any rate the “ few noble,” who may be said to have realized the idea of knighthood—such as Godfrey of Bouillon, the Black

Prince, or the Chevalier Bayard—may fearlessly challenge comparison with any members of the list of modern worthies. It is the fashion with many to decry chivalry, as though it were the cause of all those evils of which it was in fact the corrective and remedy. Those historical iconoclasts whose business it is to deface and destroy whatever has of old been held deserving of admiration or reverence, are apt, like their parallels in the religious world, to erect, in place of the idols which they dethrone, others far less worthy of worship and praise ; but so long as utilitarianism stands ready to assume the place of honour, we think that no one possessing any degree of imagination or highmindedness will ask chivalry to descend from it.

LIEGEMAN.—A subject or dependant. (See VASSAL.)

MÊLÉE.—This was the general engagement, hand to hand, in the tournament, as distinguished from the *jousts*, where the knights tilted together in pairs. The word is also applicable to a battle.

MORION.—A helmet. (See CASQUE.)

PAGE.—This was the office bestowed on children of noble birth when they had attained the age of seven years, previous to their induction into the duties of an esquire, which generally took place at fourteen. The page seldom resided under the roof of his parents, as it was supposed that their indulgence might materially interfere with the prosecution of his education ; but he was generally committed to the charge of some renowned baron, on whose person it was his business to wait, though he passed the greater part of his time among the females of the family and household. He was sedulously instructed in all martial exercises suitable to his age, and inured to obedience, courtesy of deportment, and indifference to fatigue or hardship. Many of the offices which were included among his duties would now be considered menial ; but we may regard his position as somewhat analogous to that of a

fag in one of our public schools, who, though he be a duke's son, is not supposed to be disgraced by blacking his master's shoes.

SELLE.—A poetical word for saddle.

SERF.—A slave, the lowest kind of vassal, who was as much the property of his lord as was the soil which he was employed to cultivate, or the herds which he led to pasture.

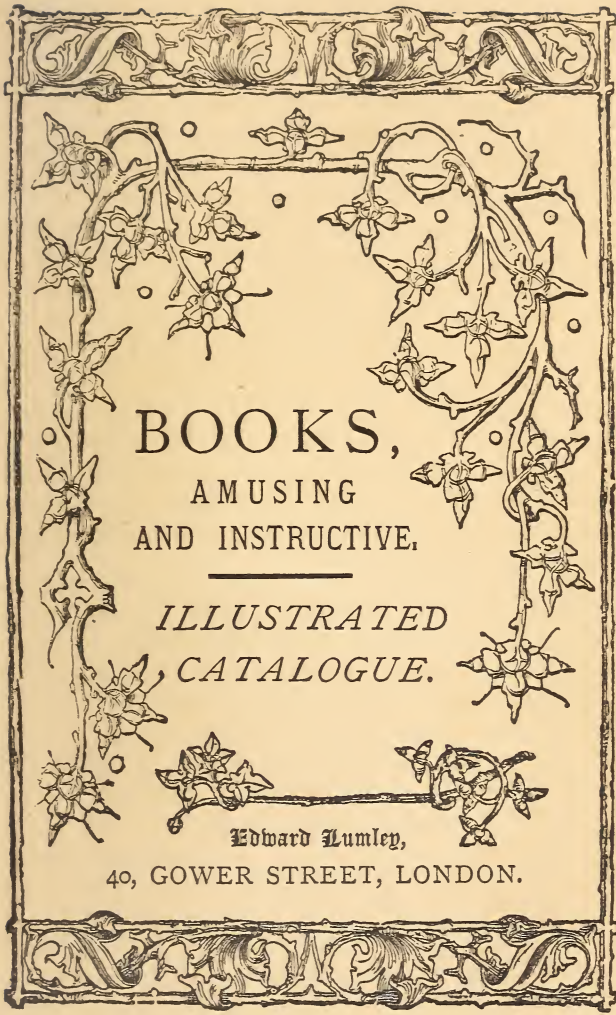
SQUIRE (or esquire).—This office, though necessarily preliminary to that of knight, was not always conferred on such as were capable of being advanced to the dignity of knighthood. The position of a squire was still that of a servant, his duty being to attend on the person of the knight, to clean his armour, and watch his proceedings in the battle or the tourney, keeping in readiness to fly to his assistance when in imminent danger. The squire was not permitted to engage in the tournament at the same time with his master; but there was a day appointed beforehand on which it was lawful for squires to contend in the lists, and on which they might possibly win their spurs. When a squire had attained the age of twenty-one years, if his conduct had been unimpeachable, and he had won honour in arms, he might demand knighthood from his master as a right. If he encountered a refusal, he might apply to any other knight for the accolade; and unless there were sufficient grounds for rejecting him, he was certain to obtain the boon which he sought.

SUZERAIN.—The feudal lord, or sovereign of a district. The king was suzerain of his whole country; his nobles were all vassals to him, but suzerains to those beneath them.

VASSAL.—One dependent on another; a subject, though not necessarily a serf or slave. A king might be the vassal of another king, if he possessed territories within the dominions of his brother sovereign. He was then bound to do homage for them, to give military service to his suzerain, and to

appear, if summoned, to answer any charge made against him in his character of vassal. His nobles, or great vassals, owed him a similar duty, which they exacted, in turn, from their own dependants. But the effect of this system was to limit the power of the crown, and increase that of the aristocracy; for each one of the great vassals, with whom alone the king came in contact, was, in himself, so powerful as to be capable of resisting his sovereign with good chance of success. The spirit of loyalty, which was an integral part of chivalry, was one great corrective of this evil, as, except in gross cases of oppression on the part of the sovereign, it restricted the probability of rebellion to a few restless and unprincipled barons, and discouraged a league of the vassals against their suzerain. Another check was in time supplied by the progress of citizenship (see *BURGER*). The number of free and chartered cities, no longer in a state of vassalage, of course abridged the power of the nobles, while it tended rather to increase that of the monarch, to whom such cities continued to owe fealty and allegiance.

WASSAIL.—Derived from *Wæs heal*, two Saxon words signifying “Health to thee.” The wassail-cup, or bowl filled with spiced wine, which was the favourite beverage at the feasts of our Saxon forefathers, received its name from the words pronounced by Rowena, the beautiful daughter of Hengist, when she presented it at a banquet to Prince Vortigern, her future husband. She advanced modestly towards him, and offered him the goblet, saying at the same time, *Wæs heal hlaford conung*—“Health to thee, my lord king.” In its more general application, the word *wassail* signifies merriment or revelry.



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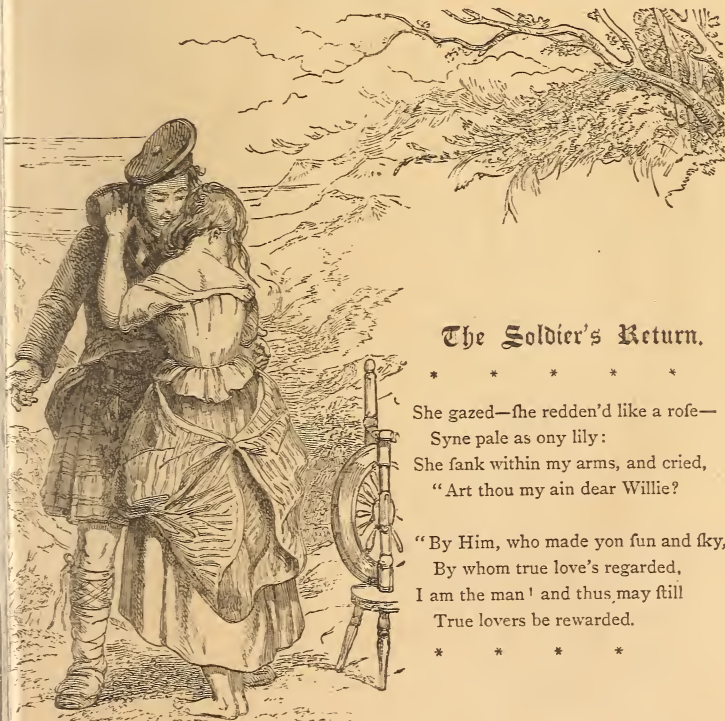
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* * * * *

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“By Him, who made yon ſun and ſky,
By whom true love's regarded,
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* * * * *

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Specimen of Illustrations to "Peter Schlemihl," page 40.

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