

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE,

OR

THE COURT OF HENRY III.

KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDENNE,

A Romance.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY.

A METRICAL TALE;

WITH SOME POETICAL PIECES.

BY ANNE RAYCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF THE "MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO," "THE ROMANCE OF THE FOREST," &c.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HER JOURNALS.

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CONTENTS
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	Page.
GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE, CONCLUDED.	
The Seventh Night	1
The Eighth Day	43
Conclusion	51
NOTES to Gaston de Blondville	59
 ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY: A METRICAL ROMANCE.	
CANTO I. The Abbey	93
II. The Night before the First Battle	132
III. The Day of the First Battle	153
IV. The Hour after the Battle	204
V. The Evening after the Battle—Scene, without the Walls of St. Alban's	221
VI. The Evening after the Battle—Scene, within the Town and Abbey of St. Alban's	252
VII. Scene in the Monastery	279
VIII. Solemn Watch within the Abbey	317
IX. Among the Dead	354

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE;
OR THE
COURT OF HENRY THE THIRD,
KEEPING FESTIVAL IN ARDEN.

VOL. III.

B

THE SEVENTH NIGHT.

HERE was miniatur'd a stately chamber, in part richly illuminated. Under a canopy, was a long sleeping-couch, but no person appeared there. In another part of this spacious room, where the light prevailed less, sat one, who leaned thoughtfully on a table, his hand covering his eyes; another figure stood near, but so obscurely drawn, that for what designed could not be certainly known. Images, holding lamps, were pictured in the chamber

GASTON DE BLONDEVILLE.

THE SEVENTH NIGHT

THAT same night, King Henry signed the death-warrant of the merchant : and he gave notice ; that, on the morrow, he would depart for his palace of Woodstock. And that same night, as was said, the prisoner thought he heard again his death-warning ; the same song of peace passed by his turret, as at this hour of the evening before. Others there were, also, about the castle, who, that night, heard strange sounds, and witnessed more than they could well understand.

Amongst these, were the wardours of a postern, near the north walls, who reported they heard grievings, and, more than once, saw some one pass, almost within reach of their spikes. When they spoke the watch-word, it answered not, and, when they raised their spears, it fled. The same appearance, though not the same moanings, was heard of those, who kept guard on the east ramparts; and the groom wayte, it was said, as he sat within the porch of King Henry's lodgings, on a sudden, saw some one standing still before it. He had not heard a step, but, on raising his head, perceived that figure. It was suspected he had been slumbering, and had dreamed of the strange accident, which had befallen the day before. But, whether this appearance were a reality, or only an impression of his fear, certain it is, that, being on watch alone, for his master

had never piped the first hour, since the night of his alarm, he had not courage now to speak, or even to step forward, till the object of his terror had passed away. Then, he came forth of the porch to little purpose; for, all without was still and lonesome, and nothing to be distinguished, save the huge shadowy towers around the court, and the stars twinkling bright above them.

But he also heard, at times, a strain of mournful music, and thought it was a requiem in the chapel. Remembering the late strange occurrence in this very court, as he had paced his round there, he began to think this was in very truth the Prior of Saint Mary, come again on some secret errand of mischief to the imprisoned merchant; and straight he wended to the keepers door, in Cæsar's tower, to give alarm.

But no one heard him there, the keeper being, at that very time, in the King's hall, waiting his command. Then he went to call the ancient wayte his master, who was sleeping out his sleep in his own lodge; and, by the time he came back with his groom, this unknown person was no where to be found. If these men, in the midst of the castle, were confounded with fearful thoughts, the poor prisoner above, distant, forlorn and distressed was no less so; for, as he lay, in watchfulness and sorrow, ruminating on the extraordinary occurrence in the field of Tournament, suddenly he thought a voice, without his door, called upon his name. He would not turn at the sound, fearful of beholding behind his grate the dim visage of the Prior of Saint Mary, as he had seen it on a former night. He knew that malignity alone could lead him hither; and, dreading even the sound of his voice,

he drew his cloak over his head, and covered himself close, hardly daring, at the moment, either to see, or hear.

A loud knocking, and then a call roused him, and, at last, he heard his name spoken; when, instantly turning at the sound, he perceived, behind the grate, not the dark countenance of the Prior, nor the stern one of his keeper, but that of his beloved and unhappy wife. Hardly daring to trust his senses, he held the lamp nearer, before he became convinced it was her very self. Without question, or one word of endearment, she called tremulously upon him to save himself by flight; and, repeating his name with hurrying fear, entreated him to unfasten the door on his side, telling him that means were provided for his escape, but that he had not an instant to lose, ere the keeper might return.

Then, almost swooning with apprehen-

sion, she undrew the outer bolts, and was so much exhausted by the effort, that she clung to the bars of the grate for support. Woodreeve did not now, as on a former night, hesitate to undraw the inner bolts : no ; with the eagerness of hope and joy, on this unlooked for meeting and intelligence, he forced back the bolts, and expected, such was the enchantment of his elation, that the door would open. He had forgotten, that the keeper's key, or the Prior's, was necessary to unfasten it.

With this recollection despair returned, for, all his strength was not sufficient to force the lock. When he had ceased his efforts, and had somewhat calmed the distress of his wife, he inquired by what means she had heard of his situation ; for the messenger he had despatched, he well knew, could not, in so short a time, have reached her. He asked, also, how she had gained admittance to his prison. To these

questions, she answered, that she had received a foreign letter, mentioning the time of his landing at Hull, while, with her sister, living in Gloucestershire; and had written by the carrier, to tell him she would abide there, till he should pass thither on his way home. While there awaiting him, she had heard of what had passed at Kenilworth, from one who being at Warwick, when the King took wassel there, had returned almost in his train to witness the festivals at the castle.

There, hearing the name of the prisoner, whose extraordinary accusation of the Baron de Blondville had become known over the whole forest and county, he had relinquished the expectation of fine sights, that he might hasten to acquaint her with her husband's danger; and it was by his contrivance, that she had gained admittance, and had hoped to effect an escape; that, for two nights, they had walked

about the castle ; and, when all was still, she had sung aloud, in the hope, that he might hear her voice, and know that she was near him. He now doubted not, that he had heard this, when he thought he listened to a warning of his death.

She was then proceeding to give him some particulars of the plan for his escape, when they heard footsteps ascending the stair. She made no attempt to conceal herself ; for, since all hope for her husband was gone, she had nothing more to dread, and she awaited the expected appearance of the keeper, with indifference.

The keeper—for it was he—came on, with lamp in one hand, and a parchment in the other ; and, seeing a stranger at the chamber-door, he surlily demanded who she was, and what she wanted. Her answers told part of the truth ; on which he seemed somewhat softened, not refusing her admittance to the prison-chamber of

her husband. Then, the poor prisoner saw enter it, at the same time, his beloved wife, and the keeper bearing his death-warrant! Happily for her, she saw not this; she saw only her husband, and ran into his arms, and wept upon his breast. What he then suffered, who saw not only the evil prepared for himself, but for her, none may tell.

When Woodreeve could recollect himself, he made sign to the keeper, to conceal that dreadful instrument from his wife, and to withdraw awhile, that he might prepare her for what was to come. This man so far respected the misery he witnessed, as to yield, and leave the chamber. Then, Woodreeve, calling forth all his fortitude to bear him with composure through the relation of his adventures since he had landed on English shore, led her, step by step, to the knowledge of all that had passed. But, when he came to

relate the manner of his trial, and all that had happened during it, all his endeavours to prepare her for the sad result were of no avail to his distressed wife; who, before he could come to his sentence, was gone beyond hearing, having swooned, as if dead, by his side.

The keeper, who was brought up to the chamber by the cries of Woodreeve for help, was moved at what he beheld, and aid was administered; which slowly brought her back to consciousness. Soon as it did, they conveyed her out of that chamber, while the keeper showed to the prisoner his death-warrant, which gave order for his execution early on the morrow. It were vain and cruel to dwell upon the misery of this innocent man, thus brought into jeopardy by the repeated crimes of others. How to break the unhappy message to his poor wife he knew not: yet know it she soon must; and he

thought it were better she should know his sentence from his own mouth than from any other. . So lately met, after long absence, and now to part for ever! He desired the keeper to bring her to the chamber, soon as he thought, she had recovered strength enough to hear, without destructive suffering, the truth he must unfold. And here a dark veil of misery falls upon a scene of pangs, too acute, too searching, to be made known.

And to many others in the castle was this night dreadful! To the young Lady Baroness, and to the King himself! How changed, indeed, was the whole appearance of this castle, from that it wore on yester-eve; where, if the inhabitants were wakeful, it was only from the restlessness of joy, and preparation for the grand festival of the morrow! Where were now the mirth and music, with which these walls had rung? where the feast, the dance,

that had made every minute pass so quickly to the poor mortals, whose hours were fleeting away beneath these princely roofs? All was changed to grief and silence. The footsteps only of attendants were heard along the halls and galleries; no voice spoke there; it seemed, indeed, as if every one were fearful of speaking. When, perchance, the door of a chamber was opened, no burst of merriment or song came forth, no harp sounded, no hum of voices. The impression of this whole change may be best signified by conceiving what one might feel on another change, on a smaller scale; that in one hall, for instance, of this same edifice, which should have been lately deserted of its splendid guests, where the few lights still burning might serve but to show its lonely grandeur, while one heavy step proceeds about the tables to extinguish these; and then the long sound of the closed door denotes the vastness and the emptiness of all that space.

Now of the King's condition and the things, that befell, on this night, there go divers tales. The truth were difficult to hit, because of the closeness, that guards a King from eye and ear, within his private chambers. Yet there be occasions, when the strangeness of occurrences, that seem not of this world's ordering, surprize and thus overcome the fidelity of servants, nay even the prudence of others, most concerned in them, and they speak of many things, which, at less pressing times, they would keep safe locked, within their secret thought, to feed alone their own fear and wonder. Thus might it be, on this night. There went forth many strange tales. This, which followeth, was much received at the time. Nay there were strong witnesses of some parts of it in the attending pages, and even in words dropped by the King himself, to warrant the passing of the story. But, be this as it may, I tell but what was told, in the Court itself.

It was said then, that King Henry, after signing the death warrant of Woodreeve, dismissed every one from his presence, and retired to his chamber for all night. There, he would hardly endure the necessary presence, of his pages, while he underwent the usual ceremonies of his wardrobe. No sooner had they divested him of his mantle and surcoat, and helped him with his night-robe, than he would permit no further intrusion upon his melancholy and vexing thoughts. Full of sadness was he and of self-reproach, it may be believed, for the premature death of one he had loved and esteemed, and for whose fall he blamed himself, since, had he not so long delayed to execute, what he called justice on the merchant, whom he was still willing to think a false accuser, the Baron, he held, would be still alive.

He sat thus ruminating, while all was still around him; and what he heard afar

was not likely to change the temper of his mind—sad and solemn music it was, mingled as he thought, with lamentation. He listened, and distinguished a choral chant of voices, faintly rise and fall. It was the dirge, which was performed in the chapel for the departed Baron de Blondville, in that very chapel, where, so few days before, his nuptials had been solemnized, in the King's presence, and where strains of joy, and hope and benediction had lately ascended.

Now, ever and anon, the trumpet groaned, and, in dismal and interrupted strain was sung, "Darkness is my bed—the worm is my sister. I am covered with the mist of death, nor may the sight of man behold me.

The King went to an oriel-window, that looked towards the chapel, and heard the chant of the choristers swell with these words, "Eternal rest give unto

him!" And then the faint response concluded with, "Rest in peace!" Then, the instruments sunk low into a murmur, and the voices were no more heard.

Now, the tale goes, that, when his Highness distinguished these words of the requiem, he was overcome with the sad thoughts they brought forth, and he sat down in his chair, and even wept, leaning his arm upon a table, without noticing what lay there. When the King took his hand from his eyes, he beheld a sword—the very sword worn by the Baron de Blondeville, and which Woodreeve had claimed, as the weapon of his murdered kinsman; the same, of which a resemblance had this day been raised up before the King, by the stranger knight, in the field of tournament, who had there pointed it, with deadly power, against the Baron.

On seeing this, his Highness was greatly amazed, marvelling how, and with

what intent it had been conveyed. While yet he gazed, the blade became dull and cloudy, and large spots of rust began to appear, which turned to a bloody hue. Then his Highness, terrified by what he saw, and thinking it the work of sorcery, looked towards the ante-room, where lay the esquires of the body, with intent to call them, and perceived some one, as he thought, passing along his chamber. The silver images, which had held lights, stood not there, and a gloom, nigh to darkness, spread through this spacious chamber, save just where some one seemed to watch. To that side the King directed his voice, and then rose up to learn the truth. Now, the hangings of this chamber were storied with the famous siege of Acon, where the first King Richard performed such valourous deeds, and the light so fell on that King on horseback, that to the King Henry he seemed to be verily riding out of the arras.

and the sword he held to be gleaming to and fro.

This was but a passing phantasm of the King's own mind, as was afterwards declared: but that, which followed, was said to be no deceit of his fancy.

He had risen to discover whether any person was in his chamber, where there had been that appearance of some one passing; he saw a gleam of light, like unto the glistening of Richard's sword, yet neither substance, nor shape, there. Again and nearer, that light appeared, and did not vanish immediately as before; and, before it faded, it assumed a form and countenance; and the King again perceived before him the stranger-knight. Having now lost all power to summon to him those who watched without, his Highness only heard these words, "The worm is my sister!"

The King gasping in breathless terror,

said, "What art thou? Wherefore art thou come?"

The voice answered, "Give me rest—the worm is my sister. The mist of death is on me!"

The King again said, "Wherefore dost thou come?" to which the phantom answered, "Give me rest!"

"How may that be?"

"Release an innocent man."

"How may I know him to be such?" said the King.

"By the sword of justice, that lies before thee. A knight-hospitaller was slain by that sword; it has, this day, slain his slayer, Gaston de Bloudeville. The Prior of St. Mary's was his accomplice. Punish the guilty. Release the innocent. Give me rest!"

The King, as was said, had now sufficiently recovered from his surprize, to demand proof of the Prior's guilt, on which

the vision answered, "I will call up one, who may no more deceive."

It is said, that the King's courage here failed, and he called out, "Forbear!"

"Recall your warrant, then," demanded the spectre solemnly, "ere it be too late to save an innocent man."

At that moment the matin bell sounded: "My time is short," said the vision; "if he perish for my sake, he shall not fall alone. Be warned!"

While these words still vibrated on his ear, the King again heard the chant from the chapel, and knew that they were performing the second requiem.

"I am summoned," said the vision: "My bed is in darkness; the worm is my sister. Yet my hope——"

The King, on looking up, saw only the dim countenance of the knight; his form had disappeared; in the next moment, the face too had passed away. But who may

speaking the horror of the King, when, in its place he beheld that of the Baron, but as in death; an expression of solemnity and suffering overspread his visage; and the King heard the words, "My guilt was my doom. I shall behold you no more. The prisoner is innocent. The Prior of St. Mary's is gone to his account. Be warned!"

At these words cold drops stood on the King's forehead, and his eyes remained, fixed on the vacant air, where the countenance of the Baron had just appeared. At the same instant, these words of the distant requiem rose on his ear, "I go unto the dark lane; that is covered with the mist of death, — a land of misery and darkness, where is the shadow of death and no order. The eye of man may no more behold me."

Then the King lost all recollection; his ear was closed against every sound. How long he remained thus none knew; only

it was yet early morning, when the esquires, sleeping in the ante-room, were roused by his summons. Then, his Highness despatched one to the constable of the castle, with command to attend him in his chamber, another to St. Mary's, to know how it fared with the Prior, and yet another to bring the Earl of Cornwall to him. For my Lord Archbishop, the King as he believed of himself, wished not to disturb the repose due to his age; but in truth he liked not to see him; for he had spoken truths, which his Highness now too heavily feared it had been his duty to listen to.

The messenger, despatched to the Priory, had no sooner passed the castle-ditch, and gotten on the outside of the great portal, than he espied carts, drawn up under the walls, in waiting, to carry away the poor merchant; ere those in the castle could behold the sad sight of his removal for the

dreadful purpose, that had been determined upon. He spied, too, under the gloomy dawn, the whole of that dismal assemblage silently watching to take away their prey. The page rued the jury's sentence on the prisoner, and he went on his way, with heavy heart; for the merchant was pitied of many.

When he reached the Priory, the brethren were at matins; and he was told the Prior was in his chamber. Marvelling, as they did, at the King's early message, one delayed, as little as might be, before he went to acquaint the Prior with it. He struck upon his chamber-door; and, receiving no answer, he went within, and the Prior was found, as had been foresaid; he was lifeless in his bed, stretched grim in death.

He, who beheld him thus, descended the stair, with all speed, to acquaint the brethren then assembled, with what had

happened, and found them in consternation great as his own, though from a different cause.

The tapers were dying away, and the only light, that glimmered strongly on the walls, came from a spot, where stood the armed figure of a knight hospitaller. His shield threw a deeper gloom around it on the tombs and even on the tapers of the monks. He pointed with his sword to the ground he stood on, and exclaimed mournfully, "A murdered knight hospitaller lies below; search for his bones, and save an innocent man from death!"

The figure stood for a moment; and, as it raised its shield, the flame thereon flashed, within the hollow helmet, and showed the stern, yet mournful countenance of the knight, such as it had appeared before the King.

Then sunk the figure with the flame, into the earth.

For a while, the brethren stood in utter silence and amazement; then they began to look upon one another, and to ask what this meant; and, even while they did so, a thrilling voice groaned from beneath. Then, without further hesitation, they sent for him whose office it was to dig graves, that search might straight be made, where that sound had seemed to be heard. Such of the monks as, in this tumult of fear and wonder, had time to understand, that their Prior was said to be dead, now hastened to his chamber to learn the truth—others remained in the church.

Some of these dared to approach the spot, where the spectre had appeared; and found it to be over that nameless grave, near to which the poor merchant had found refuge; and where their deceased brother, Anselm, had borne witness to a supernatural appearance. When the lay-brother, the digger of the graves, came, who had

not long been in office, he pored over the stone, marvelling that one so little ancient should have neither name, nor date, nor inscription of any kind, on his tomb. There were some standing by and observing, who, if they had been so minded, could have told that it had not been always thus : but they held their peace.

On raising that stone and turning up the earth beneath, a coffin appeared, bearing this inscription :—

“ Reginald de Folville, Knight Hospitaller of St. John, slain in a wood of Ardenn, rests here ! ”

There was neither taper, nor visible flame of any kind; over the grave, yet was this distinctly shown, by a strong light. The coffin-lid, which was of stone, like the receptacle, and was cut in shape of the head and helmet, being removed, there lay exposed to view the figure of the dead knight, in the armour in which he

was slain, and such as had but now appeared on the grave; the shield was on his breast; but no sword was at his side. At this spectacle, some of the brethren shrunk, overcome with so sad a sight; others pressed forward, and bent over the grave with intense curiosity.

The features of the knight were entire, though shrunk and changed in death. They were of a noble cast, and bore the very countenance of the apparition. On the forehead appeared the death-wound. While yet they looked, the appearance of the knight began to change, and the countenance to shrink and fade away. Some said this was only an effect of the living air upon mortal features so long shut up in death; others said not so, but that it was, like all the rest, to bring truth to light and administer justice to an innocent man. Then the coffin lid was replaced, and that awful spectacle of mortality was

hidden from view, for all time. During this, still music was heard in the air, like unto a requiem, hymning some blessed spirit.

The brethren, while they listened, were hushed in holy peace; some knelt over the grave; others stood, with hands and eyes lifted up, as if following the sound with their attention; and others, drawing the cowl over their eyes, bent their heads and wept in silence. Without the church, the old oaks, swaying in the wind, mingled in high and solemn harmony with the lessening chorus, till their murmur alone remained. Those, who had heard that soothing strain, long stood, as listening, still rapt in the quietude it had breathed forth, till, at length, their peace was enlivened into cheering hope.

The grave-digger, who had withdrawn to some distance, was the first to recover himself, and the sound of his footsteps

drew back to present life the thoughts of the holy men around him.

Then, they recollected the death of their Prior, and that the King's messenger was yet waiting for the tidings, which his Highness, by his extraordinary anxiety, appeared to have foreknown. One of them returned to the castle with the esquire, who, when he came near the gates, looking anxiously to see, whether the poor merchant was yet gone to his doom, perceived, that the carts, with the whole mournful apparatus of death, were already departed. On perceiving this, he struck his hands together, in sorrow and despair, with a force of action, which drew the observation of his companion, who soon learned the occasion of his honest emotion, and suffered with him.

How much more would each have suffered, could he have witnessed all, that had passed within the prison-chamber,

while those marvels were passing in court, and Priory, as already told! How much more could they have seen all the struggles of Woodreeve, for composure and resignation, and, yet harder task! his endeavours to prepare and reconcile his wife to calmer sorrow. Of late, she had refused to allow it possible, that her husband could thus unjustly and ignominiously perish in the cause of humanity; and she would have forced her way to the King's presence, there to have pleaded the truth, nothing doubting she could have convinced him of his mistake, had not bars and bolts withheld her. For the arguments of her husband, on this subject, they were as nothing with her, in this state of desperation. And thus passed the heavy hours of this night to those poor sufferers, till the keeper came to bid Woodreeve prepare for death, the guard being then in waiting to carry him away. Then, the poor prisoner

perceived, what until this moment, he had been unconscious of, that hope, in spite of reason, had lingered at his heart; for, now only was it, that he felt the full pang of despair.

And, when he heard the summons afar off, that deep and dismal bell, he stood trembling with horror, unconscious where he was—unconscious even that his wife lay senseless on his pallet! Again it called, that hollow murmuring death-sound! He heard not the footsteps ascending the stair, nor the bars of his prison withdrawn; that shuddering sound alone crept on his ear.

He perceived, however, the keeper standing now not in the room, but near the door; and he began to recover his recollection, like one, who has been stunned by a blow; yet was there a gloomy and dreadful stillness at his heart and over all around him. He turned to his wife, and

leaned over her, without shedding a tear, or uttering a groan. She was pallid, as a corpse; his own cheek was of the same hue; yet he called not for help.

The keeper advanced into the room; others, as if from respect for misery, waited without, at the door. Perceiving the condition of the poor woman, he sent off some one for assistance; and, taking Woodreeve by the arm, he looked upon him, as if he wished, yet feared, to speak. But the prisoner saw not this; for, he raised not up his eyes. Then, the keeper shook him by the arm and spoke; but he heard not the words; he only answered, that he was ready; and then, turning to give one long, last look to his poor wife, he found his eyes could not well distinguish her.

He groaned heavily, and was departing; but still the keeper told him, and, in a

voice less rugged than usual said, "Read this paper."

"I cannot see the letters," answered the prisoner; "my sight is gone; and it is also useless to read my death-warrant."

"Can you endure to hear it read?" said the keeper.

"Why not?" replied the merchant; "What have I to fear, in this world?"

"Have you nothing to hope?"

On this the prisoner lifted up his countenance; his sight began to return, and he looked at the keeper; his soul was trembling in his eyes.

Then the keeper ventured to call out "Respitè!"—and instantly the whole aspect of Woodreeve was lighted up, like one called back from death.

But this spirit was short lived; in the next instant he called out, "My wife! my wife!" and bent over her in an agony of

woe. "Is no help to be had?" cried he. "She is gone! your respite comes too late." But, while he so spoke, one, who had been sent for a restorative, returned, and, after long application, she revived.

Then Woodreeve, when his first joy had subsided, began to consider this was a respite, not a release, and that his sufferings, perhaps, were not ended, but postponed. This respite, which now began to be viewed by him with doubt, had well nigh destroyed his wife with sudden joy; to her mind it brought, not merely hope, but certainty of life for her husband. A convulsion followed, and she was, for a short time, in as much danger as before. Hardly had she recovered from this, when an order came from the constable to give Woodreeve his liberty and a chamber in the castle better suited for him. Assured of this, he drew his cloak over his eyes, and stood, for some time, weeping in si-

lence, save that his sobs were audible; then he raised his hands and eyes to Heaven, and bowed his head. His wife remained weeping on his garment, till he took her to his heart, and then they left that prison-chamber, hand in hand together.

When the King had heard of the Prior's death, he was struck with marvellous dread, and with conviction of his falsehood and of the merchant's innocence. He bitterly repented of the favourable opinion he had so long adhered to, respecting the Baron de Blondville, and of the weak credulity, with which he had listened to the artful suggestions of that false Prior, rather than to the arguments and to the strong conviction of the Archbishop of York. But the former went with his passions, the latter against them; and he helped to deceive himself. Yet, when he did find out his error, he was warm and generous in counteracting it; and, now

that he was assured how unjustly the poor merchant had been made to suffer, he loaded him with present kindness, and prepared to repay him hereafter by certain grants and privileges, that made Woodreeve the most wealthy merchant of his guild.

Nor did his Highness forget the forlorn widow and children of the deceased knight, whom he fostered and nobly supported. The miniature of that knight and the golden chain he had worn he returned to his family; and the Jew, who had forsworn himself, at the instigation of the Baron, was punished with heavy fine and imprisonment, the fine being amongst the King's gifts to Woodreeve. But, though his Highness found it now his chief delight to do kindness to the merchant and to the family of his unfortunate kinsman, yet could he not endure to behold him,

nathless the expectations of most in the court.

And now that the Prior was dead, many things came out, concerning him, which had not been suspected. He was of birth so low, that no one could learn whence he had sprung; but it appeared, that, not many years before, he had been in arms, and in the class of a follower of Sir Gaston de Blondville, one of the retainers, whom the latter was obliged to produce, on receiving his gilt spurs.

He was conjectured to have come with him from Gascony; for, he spoke that tongue, and had all the craft and soaring vanity of that people; but he was not born there; he had no foreign sound in his discourse. How he came by his wealth in those lawless times, and the use he made of it to procure him power, may be easily guessed. And it appeared this was well

suspected by my Lord of York, who had never looked upon him with a favourable eye, and had constantly endeavoured to counteract his pernicious influence.

When, hereafter, his messenger returned from Exeter, it appeared, that none in that neighbourhood had ever known the Prior of Saint Mary's, such as he had described himself to be. The arts too, practised by this Prior with certain of the brethren, who remembered the interment of Reginald de Folville—and with certain people of Kenilworth, who recollected his story, were now all exposed. Those, who, from education and station, might not have been suspected of such baseness, were now brought to truth, and were fain to hide their heads for shame. The Prior's memory was thus condemned to detestation. Be it remembered, he was no true son of the church.

THE EIGHTH DAY.

THE EIGHTH DAY.

HERE was a drawing, divided into two compartments. In one, was presented an Archbishop, kissing the hand of a crowned King ; in another, was the sole portraiture of a Prince ; who, from his mantle, and the feathers embroidered on it, appeared to be a Prince of Wales.

THE EIGHTH DAY.

ON this day, the merchant and his wife departed from Kenilworth, where they had suffered such extremes of good and evil. They departed, carrying with them joy and blessings. But it was not till they had gone a good distance through the forest, that they felt themselves fully at liberty. Then, as they looked back, and saw afar off the grey towers of the castle, above the tawny woods, nay, that very prison-turret, perched over all, which Woodreeve had never expected to leave, but for death, their hearts overflowed with thankfulness, and tears of joy fell fast.

Yet, turned they suddenly from view of it, and then went forward; even faster than before. After leaving these woods of Ardenn, they journeyed homewards in peace.

And many others departed from the King's court homeward, on this day; especially, my Lord Archbishop took solemn leave of his Highness, who gave him all due honours; for his wise counsel, regretting also, that he had not sooner followed it. The Archbishop, pleased with the release of Woodreeve and with the bounties since bestowed upon him, bowed himself, with willing homage, to his lord the King, and bade farewell to the young Prince Edward, with affectionate respect and with lofty hopes of what he might hereafter prove himself.

And, this day, left Kenilworth, the unhappy lady, Baroness de Blondville, conveyed away by her noble parents to their

own castle, there to pass in quiet shade this season of affliction. And those, who have mourned with her in this chronicle of her sad story, may haply like to look into the glass of her futurity. There, may they see many dark years of grief and sadness, passed within her father's towers; but onward they will see the gleam of hope and joy striking athwart her path, and further still, the calm sunshine of happiness settling on her home, where she is married to a nobleman right worthy of her. And here we veil this mirror of futurity, and come back to the passing time.

And, on this very day, the King hisself, who now loathed Kenilworth, broke up the court, and departed in all state with the Queen, for his palace, at Woodstock. The eventful days and hours of a very short period had wrought great change in the King's mind, and in the views and

hopes of many in his' train. Some had profited in wisdom by what they had experienced, or witnessed; others had suffered truth to glide before their eyes, without attention enough to derive one lesson from it.

And now, the King and all his court passing away under the battlements of this stately castle, in the pomp and order, with which, eight days before, they had approached it, his trumpets sounded their last to these towers, which echoed back the farewell; and then they were left to solitude and silence. This was the last gleam of courtly splendour, that lighted up the walls of Kenilworth, in this King's reign. And now the fading woods strewed yellow leaves on the long cavalcade, that wound below, whispering a moral to departing greatness; and their high tops, rustling in the blast, seemed to sigh over

those, who were leaving them for ever to their own quietness.

The King's banner still waved on the Keep, till his Highness had reached the end of the furthest avenue, the last spot, from which he could look back, on the castle, standing, with all its solid masses of tower and bastion, amidst the rich and varied hues of autumn. While he gazed, a cloud overcast it, and then a gliding light showed every battlement and turret, wall and bastion, window and loop distinctly in succession, nay, the very grate and spikes of the port-cullis, hanging in the arch of the great portal, under which his train had passed.

Just as his Highness turned into the close woods, his banner on the Keep bowed homage, and then was lowered to be no more raised till long in after years, when the King's camp lay in Ardenn, and Prince

Edward planted the royal ensign over the sons of the rebel Montfort, and restored Kenilworth to his sovereign lord and father.

This vision of the living world, which had so suddenly appeared in these wild solitudes, which had, in so short period, carried the joy and mourning of human passions, beneath these shades of Ardenn; which had banqueted and striven, had hoped and feared, had plotted and punished, had fretted and triumphed, had shown the extremes of princely grandeur, and of domestic misery, of deep villany and generous humanity, of supernatural power and mortal weakness, of human craft and of controlling, over-powering justice—this vision was now all vanished as in air, to be no more seen, or traced here, peace and silence closing over the towers where it had been.

The halls, where late the banquet re-

velled, or the scentre of justice threaten-
ed, now echoed only to the straying steps
of ancient menials. In the courts so lately
filled with princely pomp and tumult,
where the hurrying foot passed incessantly
to and fro; where the many sounding
hoof trampled, and the hum of voices rose,
all was now so still, that, when the soli-
tary sentinel ceased his measured pace,
you might hear only the shivering of the
ivy, or the distant echo to the closing door
of some deserted chamber, murmuring
through empty galleries, which, of late, to
have looked upon would have filled you
with marvel of the high dames and gaudy
gentils passing through them. These
courts now spoke only at certain hours,
when the watch-word went its round, or a
single trumpet of the garrison called to-
gether the few armed tenants, stationed
at gate, or rampart, and the guard was
changed.

Thus quickly passed away this courtly vision from these woods of Ardenn. And so from before every eye departs the vision of this life, whether it appear in lonesome forest, in busy city, in camp, or court,—where may be pressed within the compass of a few short days, the agitating passions, with all their varying shades and combinations, the numerous events and wise experience, that make up years of ordinary life and the seeming ages of a cloistered one ; for there, pale moment, lingering after moment, like rain-drop following drop, keeps melancholy chime with chants too formally repeated to leave, except on very few, the due impression of their meaning, and with slow returning vigils. Yet even here life is still a FLEETING VISION ! As such it fades, whether in court or convent, nor leaves a gleam behind—save of the light of good works !

And thus endeth this *Creux Chronique*.

CONCLUSION.

WILLOUGHTON, long before he had finished this "Trew Chronique," had some doubts, as to its origin. With the enthusiasm of an antiquary, he was willing to suppose it a real manuscript of the monks, in spite of some contradictory circumstances. The illuminations it exhibited, with the many abbreviations and quaintnesses in the writing, only a few of which, however, he has preserved in this, his translation, and those few but here and there, where they seem to have gained admission, by their accordance with the mat-

ter then in narration, these traits justified, in some degree, his willing opinion.

Perhaps, one better versed in antiquities would have found out, that several of the ceremonies of the court here exhibited, were more certainly those of the fourth Edward, than of the third Henry, or the second Richard, and would have assigned the manuscript to a later period than that of the title, or than that afterwards alluded to in the book, whether written by monk or layman. And though that same title said this chronicle was translated from the Norman tongue, by Grynbold, a monk of Saint Mary's Priory, it said nothing of its having been composed by one; and the manuscript itself seemed to bear evidence against such a supposition, by the way in which some of the reigning superstitions of Henry the Third's time and of the monastic life in general were spoken of. He must have been a very bold man, at

that period, who had dared to utter even from under a cowl, a doubt, concerning the practice of magic, or witchcraft. It is, however, to be acknowledged, that, on some other points, his notions were not unworthy of a monk of the thirteenth century, that is, if he really credited all the supposed incidents of the hall, and of several other parts of the castle. The way, in which he speaks of the melancholy monotony and other privations of a cloister, seem to come from heart-felt experience; yet, if it had been so, he might not have ventured thus to have expressed his feelings.

But at whatsoever period this "Trew Chronique" had been written, or by whomsoever, Willoughton was so willing to think he had met with a specimen of elder times, that he refused to dwell on the evidence, which went against its stated origin, or to doubt the old man's story of the

way in which it had been found ; and he was about to enter upon another of these marvellous histories, entitled “A trew historie of two Mynstrells, that came by night to the commandary of Saint John Hospitalier, at Dalby sur les Wouldes, and what they there discovered.”

But, behold ! the beams of another day springing on the darkness ! On drawing aside a window-curtain, he perceived the dawn upon the horizon ; and, who ever yet beheld those first pure tints of light upon the darkness, more touching, more eloquent to the soul, than even the glorious sun-rise and turned abruptly from them ? The towers of Warwick castle soon began to show themselves on the east, their mighty shadows raised up against the increasing light in peace and stillness. The morning-star alone rode bright above them, trembling on the edge of a soft purple cloud, that streaked the dawn.

The heart of Willoughton was deeply affected by the almost holy serenity, the silent course of order and benevolence, that he witnessed in these first minutes of another day ; he looked up to Heaven, and breathed a prayer of blissful gratitude and adoration ; and then departed to his rest.

“ To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new.”

NOTES.

NOTES.

VOL. I. page 91. "Corn." Leland mentions, from a Manuscript in the Cottonian Library, describing the entrance of Henry the Seventh into York, during his progress, that, "in divers places of the citie was hanging out of tapestry and other clothes, and making of galeries from on side of the strete over athwart to that other: some casting out of obles and wafers, and some casting out of comfets in great quantitie, as it had been haylestones, for joye and rejoicing of the King's comyng."

When the same King visited Bristol, and was publicly received there, the same account says, after the description of a very ample procession: "And then the King proceeded towarde th' Abbey of Seint Austeyns, and by the way ther was a baker's wiff cast oute of a wyndow a great quantitie of whete, crying, "Welcome, and good luck!"

Ibid. "Before the castle gates." Of these gates, or of the ramparts, or of the moat, that once surrounded them, there are now no traces left. All that remains of Kenilworth, is already noticed in the introduction to the Manuscript. Such, at least, it appeared in the autumn of 1802, when the writer viewed it, with a mixture of admiration and disappointment.

Vol. I. page 140. "These were in that great oriel." The great oriel here mentioned, was probably that made by order of Henry the Third, the expense of which is recorded to have been six pounds sixteen shillings and fourpence.

Vol. I., page 140. "Voide." The following curious particulars relative to this distinguished part of ancient entertainments, are from the articles ordained by King Henry the Seventh, for the regulation of his household: "Thirty first of December, 1494; printed by the Society of Antiquaries, from a copy in the Harleian Library."

"AS FOR THE EVEN OF THE DAY WHEN A VOIDE SHALL BE HAD."—"In the even of the day of estate, it is the usher's parte, and it please the King, to have a voide; then the usher must warne the servant of the spicerie to make readie for the spice-plates for the King and the Bishoppe, and for the lordes and estates, after as they bee; and after as

yee see necessarie; and also to warne the King's servers and esquires, which must wayte that tyme, and the server of the chamber, for the Bishopp's spice-plate; then yee must goe to the servant of the seller, and warne him to make readie the King's cuppe and the Bishopp's; and as many festeres of wine as yee thinke will serve the people. Also yee must receave the pile of cuppes, and bring them upp, and sett the Bishopp's covered cupp above them, if yee seem it before/to doe. Alsoe, yee must warne an esquire for the bodie, to bring the King's cupp to the cup-board, and an esquire of the howsehould to bring the Bishopp's, if the usher will. Alsoe, you must warne the server to fetch the spice-plates for the Kinge, and a server of the chamber for the Bishoppe, and bring it to the cup-board. Alsoe, you must appointe for everie plate, an esquire of the housholde to serve the estates and lordes, as yee thinke best. There what time yee thinke the King is readie to take his voide, then yee must assemble them together, and bring them to the cup-board; the usher goeing before, making roome to the cup-board; then the chamberlaine goeing to the cup-board, taking with him three of the greatest estates, delivering to the greatest the towell; the second estate the spice-plates; the third estate the cuppe;

and when they come to the Kinge with it, the chamberlaine taketh the covering^o of the spice-plates, giving assay to the bearer ; and when the Kinge and Bishopp have taken spice and wine, then the lordes deliver it to the officers againe ; then the usher to appoint esquires to serve the lordes and the people largely. And lett the Bishoppe's spice-plates bee served forth amongst others, without it bee an Arch-bishoppe ; then this done, the usher to call in cuppes againe, and sett them in order as they came ; and so bring them forth out of the chamber, like as they came ; and if it bee in the night tyme, that you must have light at the voide, bee right well advised how many lights you must have, and how many shall goe with the King's spice-plates and cupp, when hee shall drinke ; BUT EVER LOOK THERE BE ODD IN NUMBER AT THE VOIDE."—Royal Household Ordinances, page 113.

Mr. Pegge, in his "Dissertation on the obsolete office of Esquire of the King's Body," says, "A voide was a small collection of spices (a term at that time including all sorts of sweets of the confectionary kind) and rich wines frequently taken by the King and Queen after even-song, which on great festivals was attended with much state. I have no better guess at the meaning of the word, than that it is a transfer of the term from the uten-

sil to the ceremony, a voyder being a kind of tray still in use, under that denomination, for the purpose of moving glasses, &c. from one room to another. Time seems to have contracted the word a little, though its meaning has been enlarged so far as to imply the whole ceremony. After which there was a voyde,' occurs frequently in accounts of ancient high festivals. But what most favours this derivation, is a passage in Sir George Buck's 'Account of the Coronation of King Richard the Third.' —' Lastly,' says he, ' after dinner came the Lord Mayor of London and the Sheriffs with a voyder.' The Lord Mayor of London is chief butler on a coronation, and serves the King with a cup of wine, and this formerly might be a branch of that office." —Curialia, pages 15, 16.

Vol. I. page 141. " Maister Henry." Of this personage, there are several memorials in the records of the reign of Henry the Third and elsewhere. The treasurer and chamberlains of this sovereign were commanded by writ to pay to Master Henry, the King's poet, a hundred shillings, due to him for arrears of his stipend, and that without any delay, or difficulty, although the Exchequer should be then shut. At another time, " By virtue of a Writ of *Allocate*, directed to the Treasurer and Barons, allowance was made to Peter Chacepark, keeper of

the wardrobe, of several payments by him made, to wit of xl. to Master Henry the Poet, of cixl. to Alexander, King of Scots, for his corrody, upon his coming to the King of England's court, and returning back again."—See Madox's History of the Exchequer, vol. i. p. 391—vol. ii. p. 202. A corrody, it seems, was nearly synonymous with a pension, though it sometimes meant a separate gift. Warton, who notices some of these donations to the poet, calls him Henry of Avranches.

Vol. I. page 142. "The four Esquires of the Body." This attendance was due to the sovereign as a knight. Other knights had two; a knight sovereign had four esquires. The Household Book of Edward the Fourth, before referred to, says, "Esquiers for the body iiii, noble of conditions, whereof alwey ii attendaunt upon the King's person, to array and unarray hym; to watche day and nyght; to dresse hym in his clothes, and they be callers to the chamberlayn, if any thing lak for his person or plesaunce; theyre business is in many secrets, some sitting in the King's chaumbre, some in the hall, with persones of like service, which is called knyghte's service, taking every of theym for his lyverey at nyght di' a chete loffe, one quart wyne, a gallon ale; and for wynter lyvery, from All Hallowentyde tyll Estyr one percher wax, one candell wax, ii candells peris'.

one tallwood and diu', and wages in the countyng house ; yf he be present in courte, dayly vii d. ob' and clothinge with the houshold wynter and somer, or xl. s. besides his other fee of jewel-house, or of the thesaurere of Englonde ; and besides his wachyng, clothing of chaumbre of the King's warderobe. He hath abyding in this courte, but vii servauntes, lyverey sufficiaunt for his horses in the countrey by the King's herberger ; and if any squier for the body be lette blode, or elles for watched, he shall have lyke lyverey with knyghtes, litter and rushes all the yere of the sergeaunt ussher of the hall and chaumbre ; oftyn tymes these stond in stede of kervers and cupberers."

Of carvers a former section of the same book had spoken thus :—" A kerver at the boarde, after the King is passed it, may chese for hymself one dyshe or two, that plentie is among. The King will assigne a dishe to some lorde or straunger in chaumbre or hall, elles the almoner woll see to straungers in suche rewardes, if it seme hyme worshipfull, elles all at the Kinge's boarde goethe to almesse. In the Noble Edward's dayes" (in household books this always means the days of Edward the Third) " worshipfulles quires did this servyce ; but now thus for the more worthy. Theis kervers and cupberers pay for the carriages of their harneys

and other in court. *Them needeth to be well sped in taking of degree in the schole of urbane.*"

But this office of esquire of the body has given occasion to a work, than which scarcely any is more copious of particulars, relative to the domestic habits of our ancient sovereigns. It need hardly be added, that this is the Dissertation of the late Mr. Pegge. The following large extract will be pardoned by those, who have the book, and doubtless well received by those, who have it not. After mentioning the duties of this officer in the day time, the author says, "Thus much for the office of Esquire of the Body by day; but the principal, most essential, and most honourable part of his duty, was at night; for when the King retired to bed, the esquire had the concentrated power of the *Gentlemen Ushers*, the *Vice-Chamberlain*, and *Lord Chamberlain*, in himself, having the absolute command of the house both above and below stairs. At this period (the reign of King Henry VIII.) and till the close of the last century, the royal apartments, from the *bed-chamber* to the *guard-chamber* inclusively, were occupied in the night by one or more of the servants belonging to each chamber respectively. The principal officer, then called the GENTLEMAN (now the LORD) of the *bed-chamber*, slept on a pallet-bed in the same room with the KING; and in the *ante-room*, between the

privy-chamber and the *bed-chamber* (in the reign of King Charles II. at least) slept the GROOM of the *Bed-chamber*. In the *privy-chamber* next adjoining slept TWO of the *six GENTLEMEN of the PRIVY-CHAMBER* in waiting; and in the *presence-chamber* the *ESQUIRE of the Body*, on a pallet-bed, upon the *haut pas*, under the *cloth of estate*, while one of the *PAGES* of the *Presence-chamber* slept in the same room, without the verge of the canopy, not far from the door. All these temporary beds were put up at night, and displaced in the morning, by the officers of a particular branch of the wardrobe, called *the wardrobe of beds*. Beyond all these in the *guard-room* was the *watch*, consisting of a certain number of the *Yeomen of the Guard*. After supper, previous to the King's retiring to his *bed-chamber*, the proper officers were to see all things furnished for the night, some for the King's *bed-chamber*, and others for the King's *cupboard*, which was sometimes in the *privy-chamber*, and sometimes in the *presence-chamber*, at the royal pleasure, and furnished with refectations for the King's refreshment, if called for. After this, the officers of the day retired, and committed all to the charge of the *ESQUIRE of the BODY*. This DOMESTIC CEREMONY was called THE ORDER of ALL-NIGHT; the nature of which I shall now give at large, from an account preserved in the LORD

CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE. The writer, who was himself an **ESQUIRE** of the **BODY** to two successive **KINGS**, goes circumstantially through the whole of the *Esquire's business of the Night*; from whence it will appear, that, even so lately as the middle of last century, the office was of so confidential a nature, that no dispatch, letter, or message, could be communicated to the King in the Night, but what was brought to the **ESQUIRE** on duty, and by him carried in *propria personâ* to the King.

The ORDER of ALL-NIGHT,

As described by Ferdinando Marsham,

ESQUIRE of the **BODY**,

To King Charles I. and King Charles II.

“The **ORDER** of **ALL-NIGHT** for the **KING** was antiently as followeth:—

“The *Gentleman Usher, Daily Waiter*, having the charge of constant attendance upon his Majesty until nine o'clock at night, called to the *Yeoman Usher* attending at the *guard-chamber door*, for ten Yeomen to attend him to go for **ALL-NIGHT** for the King. The *Gentleman Usher* went bare-headed, and the *Yeoman (Usher)* to the *pantry* for bread—to the *buttery* (i. e. butlery) for two flagons of beer—to the *spicery*, for *sugar*, nutmegs, &c.—to the *wine-cellar*, for two great flagons of wine, and drank the King's health in both cellars, causing

all to be uncovered. going and back, having a *Groom of the Chamber*, carrying a lighted torch before the *Gentleman Usher*, until he returned into the *presence-chamber*, and lay all the *services* upon the cupboard there; and so delivers all to the *ESQUIRE* of the *BODY*, and takes his leave. The *ESQUIRE* then takes the *inner keys* and charge of *ALL-NIGHT*, calls to the *Yeoman Usher*, or *Clerk* of the *Cheque*, for the roll of the *watch*, and the *page* of the presence, with a *silver bason*, with a *wax mortar*, and *sizes*, attends the *ESQUIRE* into the *privy gallery*. Then he (the *ESQUIRE*) takes the *bason*, &c. and carries it to the *King's bed-chamber*, and stays until his Majesty goes into his bed, and then goes himself to bed, under the *state* in the *presence-chamber*, in a *pallet bed*, sent up from the *wardrobe*. At eight o'clock in the morning there was the *ESQUIRE's* breakfast usually brought up to the *waiter's chamber*, where the *Gentleman Usher* attended with the *quarterly waiter* to relieve and discharge him, and to take care of the *daily waiting*, and to see the *presence* and other *rooms* made sweet and clean. The breakfast was a good piece of boiled beef, of fourteen pounds weight, with bread, beer, and wine; and sometimes a boiled capon, and a piece of veal or mutton.

“ There was a silk *traverse* hung up, and drawn by the *Page* (of the Presence,) and the chain turned, and the *page* lay on a pallet-bed without the *traverse*.

“ After the *ESQUIRE* of the *BODY* had carried the *morter* into the *bed-chamber*, and received the *word* of the *KING*, with his *treble* (triple) *key*, which the *ESQUIRE* in waiting always had, he locked the *outward* door, leading into the *privy-lodgings*, and then went into the *guard-chamber*, and set the *watch*, and then returned into the *presence-chamber*, where he lodged under the canopy, being the *CHIEF OFFICER* OF THAT NIGHT.

“ In all the time of my duty and service upon my Royal Master, his late *Majesty* of blessed memory, I, being *ESQUIRE* of the *BODY*, did always come into the *KING*'s *bed-chamber*, without asking leave of any; and I did every night, having my sword and cloak on, bring in the *morter* into his *Majesty*'s *bed-chamber*, and stayed there as long as I pleased, which was commonly till his *Majesty* went into bed; and, having received the *word* from his *Majesty*, I set the *guard*, and after *ALL-NIGHT* was served up, I had the sole and absolute command of the house, above and below stairs, as his *Majesty* did declare upon several occasions to be the right of my place. And in the time of war, upon all occasions that required,

I went into the *bed-chamber*, and awaked his *Majesty*, and delivered all letters and messages to his *Majesty*, and many times, by his Majesty's command, I returned answers to the letters, and delivered orders. And I remember that, coming to the KING's *bed-chamber door*, which was bolted on the inside, the late *Earl of BRISTOL*, then being in waiting, and lying there, he unbolted the door upon my knocking, and asked me what news? I told him I had a letter for the KING; the Earl then demanded the letter of me, which I told him I could deliver to none but the KING himself; upon which the KING said, '*The Esquire is in the right; for he ought not to deliver any letter or message to any but myself; he being at this time the CHIEF OFFICER OF MY HOUSE; and, if he had delivered the letter to any other, I should not have thought him fit for his place.*'

"And, before this time, I never heard that any offered to hinder the *ESQUIRE* from coming to the KING, and I have frequently brought letters and messages to the *bed side* when the *Duke of RICHMOND* was in waiting. • By me,

"FERDINANDO MARSHAM."

It may be pardonable to extend the encroachment upon this interesting part of Mr. Pegge's book,

so far as to say, that, from the Notes annexed to it, Mr. Marsham appears to have been a collateral ancestor of the earl of Romney, that "*sizes*" are still the denomination of certain allowances of bread, beer, cheese, &c. in the University of Cambridge; that a silk "*traverse*" is a silk curtain; that the earl of Bristol was of the name of Digby, which family became extinct, as earls, in 1698, and that the Duke of Richmond was Lodowic Stuart, which title ceased in that family in 1672; and that Chaucer was probably an Esquire of the Body to Edward the Third.

Vol. I. page 143, "Knights of the household." The Household Book of Edward IV. says, "Knights of household xii, bachelers sufficient, and most valient men of that ordre of every countrey, and more in number yf it please the King; whereof iiii to be continually abyding and attending uppon the King's person in courte, besides the kervers, as above sayd, for to serve the King of his bason, or such other ser-vyse, as they may do the King, in absence of the kervers, sitting in the King's chaumbre and hall, with persones of lyke servyce, everyche of them have etyng in the hall, and taking for his chaumbre at none and nyght, one lofe, one quart wyne, one gallon ale, one percher, one candell wax, ii candelles peris', one tallwood et dñm', for wynter lyvery, from

Allhalowentyde tyll **E**styr, rushes and litter all the yere of the sergeaunt ussher, and for keping of theyr stuff and chambre, and to purvey for theyr stuffe ; also at theyre lyverey in the countrey, amonges them all iiii yomen ; after tyme vii of these knyghts be departed from court, and the three yomen to ete dayly in the hall with the chamberlaynes, tyll theyre sayd maistyr come agayne ; so that the number of knyght's servants be not incresed, when theyre maistyr be present. Every knyght shall have resorting into this court iii persones wayters ; the remenant of theyre servants to be at theyre lyverey in the countrey, within vii myles to the King, by the herbergers sufficiently lodged ; and it may be ii knyghts togeder ; also they pay in this courte for the carryage of theyre own stuffe, and if a knyght take cloathing, it is by warrant made to the King's warderob, and not of the thesaurer of household. Sometymes knyghts take a fee. heer yerely of x marcs, and cloathing, but because ray clothinge is not according for the King's knyghts, therefore it was left."

This exactness, in specifying the quantities and sorts of the food and other matters, to be received by the knights of the household, could not be thought degrading to them, since it prevailed in the cases of their superiors ; the King and the royal

family not excepted. Many of our sovereigns, from Edward the Third, to William and Mary, had their own "diets" described, with nearly as much particularity in their own household books. That, for Edward the Fourth was, "The Kyng for his brekefast, two looves made into four maunchetts, and two payne demayne, one messe of kychyn gosse, dim gallon of ale. Item at none for his bourde sitting allone viii loves with the trenchers; his servyce of kychyn cannot be expressed at certeyn, but the noble Edward the Thirde in comune dayes ferriall, being no prees of lordes or straungers at his bourde, was served with viii diverse dishes, and his lordes in hall and chamber with v, his other gentylnen in court with iii disshes, besides potage; and groomes and others with ii disshes diverse. Ther the King's meate, two pichers and dim wyne, ii gallons ale. Item for his souper by himself, viii loves, with the trenchers in all the kychyn, after the day, or after the stuff that is had within forth, ii pychers wyne, ii gallons ale, besides the fruter and waferer. Item, bred and drinkinges for the King's person, betwixt meeles, cannot be ascerteined but by recorde of the usshers of the chamber. Item, nyghtly for the bed making, one picher half a gallon measure." With the same accuracy other matters were distributed. ("Item for the King

and his chamber also, when the day shortneyth, and no prees of grete straungers, iii torches, one tortays and iii pricketts for the table and cup-board, if it be not fasting day ; vi perchers, x candells wax, for the sizes of the chamber, ii mortars wax every nyght ; and at the festes, or cumming of lordes or other straungers worshipfull, it must be more large by the discreccion and recorde of the usshers, by oversight of the chamberlayn and others. Item for his own person, one chymney brennyng day and night, xviii shides, viii faggotts for wynter season ; and if there be more nedeful chymneys to brenne for the King's honor in the grete chamber, then as the chamberlayn and ussher think reasonable ; and dayly all things to be recorded by the ussher into the countyng-house. Item for the beddes and payletts in the King's chamber, all litter and rushes of the serjeaunt of the hall by ovyrsight, for all thinges that growith of the thesaufere of household his charge, must be overseen the expences thereof by the styward and countroller." Among the curious circumstances of these extracts is the orthography, the same word being differently spelt even in the same line ; and this in a book, which must have been frequently referred to by persons of rank, and doubtless had been seen by the King himself—in fact, a state-record.

Vol. I. page 178. "The sayers' art. The narratives chiefly fictitious, but partly true, related by the sayers, or Tale-tellers," who frequented the banquet halls of old times, were often the subjects of poems sung by the minstrels.

Vol. I. page 178. It was probably because the custom of listening to these narrators came to us from France, that our ancestors denominated them by so literal a translation of their French title. In the extract, published by Mr. Ellis, from R. de Brunn's translation of Wace's Brut, containing an account of Arthur's coronation, we find

"Disours enow telled fables."

In the list of those, who afforded entertainment at the feast, these *disours* are mentioned last, as are also their rewards from the King.

"Unto *disours*, that telled them gestes,
He gave clothes of wild bestes"

Vol. I. Page 191. "Until the Wayte piped his second watch in all the courts." A Wayte was an established officer in royal palaces, and probably in other mansions. His duties and privileges in the palaces of Edward the Fourth, are thus described in the Household Book, which has been already referred to.

"A Wayte, that nyghtly, from Miquelmasse till Shere Thursday, pipeth the watche within this

courte fower tymes, and in somer nyghtes three tymes; and he to make bon gayte and everey chambre door and office, as well for fyre as for other pickers or perilles. He eateth in the hall with the minstrelles, and taketh liyverey at nyght dimid' payne, dimid' gallon ale; and for somer nyghtes two candelles peris', dim' bushell cooles; and for wynter nyghtes halfe a lufe, dim' gallon ale, fower candelles peris', dim' bushell coles; and dayly, if he be present in the courte by the chakker rolle iiiiℓ, ob. or iii et. by the discession of the Steward and Thesaurer, and aftyr the cunnyng that he can, and good deservyng; also cloathing with the houshold yomen or minstrelles, according to the wages that he taketh; and if he be syke or lette bloode, he taketh ii loves, one messe of greate mete, one gallon ale; also he parteth with the generall giftes of houshold, and hath his bedding carryed, and his groomes togeder, by the countroller's assignement. And under this yoman a groom wayte; if he can excise the yoman in his absence, then he taketh clothing, mete, rewardes, and other thinges, like to the other groomes of houshold. Also this yoman wayteth at the making of Knyghtes of the Bathe, watching by nyght-tyme upon theym in the chappell; wherefore, he hath of fee, all the watchinge—clothinge that the Knyghtes should weare uppon."

Vol. II. page 41. "A special Suttleie." At banquet given upon great occasions, it was usual to have several "suttleties," in every one of which was a representation, or mimickry, of some part of the even then celebrated.

Vol. II. page 64. "The whole court." For a court-festival in a later reign, and for the practical jokes, which were rewarded by general laughter, see the account in Leland's Collectanea of the banquetings and other rejoicings, on the arrival in England of Catharine of Spain, ultimately the wife of Henry the Eighth. Then, Henry, his father, had caused the walls of Westminster Hall, "the which is of great length, breadth, largeness and right craftye building, to be richly hanged with pleasant clothes of arras, and in its upper part a royall and great cupboard, to be made and erected, the which was in length all the breadth of the chauncery, and in it were sett seven shelves of haunshes of a goodly height, furnished and filled with as goodly and rich treasure of plate as could be scene, great part whereof was gould and all the remanant of silver gilt. When the King and the Queene had taken their noble seats under their clothes of Estate in the said hall, and every one of the nobles were ordered in their places convenient, then began, and entered the following

goodly and pleasant disguising, which was conveyed and shewed in proper and subtile pageants ; the first was a castle right cunningly devised, sett upon wheelles, and drawn into the said hall by fower great beasts, with chaines of gold. The two first beasts were lyons, one of them of gold and the other of silver : the other two were, one of them an bart with gilt hornes, and the fourth was an Elke. In each of these foure beasts were two mon, one in the fore part, and another in the hinder part, secretly hid and apparelled : nothing of them was seen but their leggs, which were secretly hid and disguised after the proportion and kinde of those of the beasts that they were in. Thus this castle was by these foure beasts properly conveyed from the nether part of the hall to before the King and the Queene, who were in the upper part of the same hall. There were within the same castle, disguised, viii goodly and fresh ladyes looking out of the windowes of the same. In the foure corners of this castle were iiij children, that is to say, in every square of the castell one, sett and appearing above the height of it. In every of these turrets was a little childe apparelled like a maiden ; and all the four children sang most sweetly and harmoniously in all the cumming of the castle. the length of the hall, till it was brought before the

King's majestie ; where when it had been conveyed it was sett somewhat out of the way towards the one side of the hall.

“ The second pageant was a shippe, likewise sett uppon wheels, without any leaders in sight : the same was in right goodly apparel, having her masts, toppes sayles, tackling, and all other apperteynances necessary unto a seemely vessell, as though it had been sayling in the *œa* ; and so passed through the hall by the whole length, till they came before the King, somewhat besides the said castle. The masters of the shippe and their company, in the counteynances, speaches and demeanour, used and behaved themselves after the manner and guÿse of mariners, and there cast their anchors somewhat besides the said castle. In this shippe there was a goodly and a fayre ladye, in her apparell like unto the Princess of Spain. Out and from the said shippe descended by a ladder two well bescene and goodly persons calling themselves *hope* and *desire*, passing towards the rehearsed castle with their banners in manner and forme as ambassadors from the knights of the mount of love unto the ladies within the castle, making great instance in the behalfe of the said knights, for the intent to attaine the favour of the said ladyes present ; making their means an intreaties as woers and breakers of the matters of love between

the knights and the ladyes. The said ladyes gave their finall answe're of utterly refuse and knowledge of any such company, or that they were ever minded to the accomplishment of any such request ; and plainely denyed their purpose and desire. The two said Ambassadors therewith taking great displeasure; shewed the said ladyes, that the knights would for this unkind refusall make battayle and assault, and so and in such wise to them and their castle, that it should be grievous to abide their power and malice.

“ Incontinent came in the third pageant, in likeness of a great hill, or mountaine, in the which were inclosed viii goodly knights with their banners spredd and displayed, naming themselves the Knights of the Mount of Love, and passed through the said hall towards the King's grace, and there tooke their staunding upon the other side of the shippe. Then these two Ambassadors departed to their masters, the knights, who were within the mount, and shewed the disdain and refusall, with the whole circumstance of the same. The knights, not being therewith content, with much malice and courageous minde, issued from the said mount with their banners displayed, and hastily spedd them to the rehearsed castle which they forthwith assaulted, soe and in such wise, that the ladyes yealding themselves

descended from the castle, and submitted themselves to the power, grace, and will of these noble knights." This affair ended, as might be expected in a dance, during which, "the three pageants, the castle, the shippe, and the mountain, removed and departed. In the same wise the said disguisers, as well the knights as the ladies, after certaine leasuré of their solace and disport, zvoyded and evanished out of light and presence."

Then, occur two bass dances, which appear to have been minuets—one between Prince Arthur and the lady Cecill, the other between the Princess Catharine and one of her Spanish ladies, in Spanish dresses.

"In the third and last place, the Duke of Yorke, having with him the Ladye Margaret his sister in his hand, came down and daunced two bass daunces. Afterwards he perceiving himself to be accombred with his clothes, sodainly cast off his gown, and daunced in his jactett with the said ladye Margarett in so goodly and pleasant a maner, that it was to the King and Queene great and singular pleasure. Then they departed againe, the duke to the King and the ladye to the Queene. This disguising royall thus ended, the voydee began to enter in the maner of a bankett, exceeding the price of any other used in great season. Before the

voidee, came in five score couple, Earles, Barons, and Knights, over and besides Squiers, having collers and chains of gould, every each of them throughout, bearing the one of them a spice-plate, the other a cuppe, beside yeomen of the guard that followed them with potts of wine to fill the cuppes. The spice-plates were furnished in the most goodly manner with spices, after the manner of a voidee; and the cuppes were replenished with wine, and universally throughout the said hall distributed. The number of the said spice-plates and cuppes were goodly and marvellous, and yet the more to be wondred, for that the cupboard was nothing touched, but stood compleat, garnished and filled, seemingly not one diminished."

Vol. II. page 83. "Arabian jongleur." The Arabian jongleurs were said to practise a kind of natural magic, and by some means of chemistry, to raise up false appearances.

Vol. II. page 88. "His Highness himself had once proof." Matthew Paris records this strange charge made by Henry the Third, in full council, against Hubert de Burgh, his justiciary, Earl of Kent, that Hubert had taken by stealth, from the royal treasury, a stone of the highest value, which had the

effect of rendering him (Henry) invincible in battle, and had traitorously sent it to Leoline, King of Wales, his enemy.

Vol. II. Page 100. "Silver warriors." Statues holding torches were usual in palaces on the Continent. Cellini, the celebrated Italian artist of the sixteenth century, tells us, in his *Life*, of twelve silver statues, several feet high, which he wrought for Francis the First, for the purpose of holding lights round his table, at grand entertainments. Such images represented various characters, sometimes satyrs, sometimes warriors, and sometimes fools, or court jesters.

Vol. II. page 104. "As he had sitten, at Winchester." This was in the year 1249; and in the hall of the royal palace, when he commanded, with such impetuosity, that the doors should be shut, for the purpose of detaining the accomplices of robbers, who refused to point them out, and when he loudly expressed his indignation against the whole neighbourhood, as abettors of them.

Vol. II. page 105. "The Lord of Warwick." John de Placitis, or de Plesset, who received the title from Henry the Third, as the husband of Margery, sister and sole heiress of a former Earl.

Vol. II. page 109. "Cedars." Many noble ce-

dars are now growing in the grounds of Warwick Castle, whose silvered branches show beautifully among the dark flakes of their foliage; but we must not venture to fancy, that any of these ever shaded John de Placitis.

Vol. II. page 110. "Maria, the French Poetess." Mr. Warton, in noticing Hawes's Temple of Glasse, (first printed by Wynkin de Worde, in 1500,) which he considers as a "Copy of the House of Fame of Chaucer," says, "In the mean time, there is reason to believe, that Chaucer himself copied these imageries from the Romance of Guigemar, one of the Metrical Tales, or Lais of Bretagne, translated from the Armorican original, into French, by Marie, a French poetess, about the thirteenth century."

Of this lady and of her works we have a better record in the ample and curious Dissertation on her life and writings, written by the Abbé de la Rue, and translated by F. Douce, Esquire. From this it appears, that she was probably born in Britany. "The Duke of that province was the Earl of Richmond in England: many of his subjects were in possession of knight-fees in that honour; and Mary might have belonged to one of these families." She was, besides, extremely well versed in the literature

of this province; and we shall have occasion to remark, that she borrowed much from the works of the writers of that country, in the composition of her own."

Notwithstanding her foreign origin, the subjects of the greater part of Mary's poems were chosen by her from "the Romances of Chivalry," amongst the "the Old Welsh and Armoric Britons,"—a selection, the policy of which is obvious, since it appears that she was patronized by Henry the Third and his court. Some of these stories she had learned only from having heard them recited.

.. Plusiers en ai oi cōter
 Nas voil laisser ne oublier."

"Her lays," says the Dissertation, "were extremely well received by the people. Denis Pyramus, an Anglo-Norman poet, and the contemporary of Mary, informs us, that they were heard with pleasure in all the castles of the English Barons, but that they were particularly relished by the women of her time. He even praises them himself."

* Vol. II. page 131. "Robin Hood." Although ballads upon the subject of this person are said by Dr. Percy to have been popular in the reign of Edward the Third, such were known before that æra. One,

which he considers as "of much earlier date," is in print ; and it appears, that there was a Robinhood in the reign of Richard the First.

Vol. II. page 137. "Robert of Gloucester." A monk of the Abbey there, in the time of Henry the Third and Edward the First.

END OF THE NOTES

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY:

POETICAL ROMANCE.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY.

SPIRIT of ancient days! who o'er these ~~walls~~,
Unseen and silent, hold'st thy solemn state,
Thy presence known where the gloom deepest falls,
And by th' unearthly thoughts that on thee wait:
Descend, and touch my heart with thine own fire,
And nerve my trembling fancy to aspire
To the dread scenes that thou hast witnessed here!
Teach me, in language simple and severe,
(Such best may harmonize with ruder times)
With place and circumstance of awful crimes,
To paint th' awakening vision thou hast spread
Before mine eyes——tale of the mighty dead!
And let not modern polish throw the light
Of living ray within thy vaults of night.

But give thy elder words, whose sober glow,
 Like to th' illumined gloom of thine own aisles,
 Touching the mind with more than light may show,
 Wakes highest rapture while it darkly smiles.
 Presumptuous wish ! Ah ! not to me are given
 Those antient keys, that ope the Poet's heaven,
 Golden and rustless ! NOT TO ME ARE GIVEN !
 But, if not mine the prize, not mine the crime
 Lightly to scorn them, nor the simple chime,
 Though tuneless oft, when to the scene more true
 Than ~~no~~ verse, bright with Castalian dew.
 Like Grecian goddess, placed in Saxon choir,
 Is the false union of the cadenced rhyme
 And measured sweetness of the tempered lyre
 With subjects darkened by the shroud of Time.
 As Gothic saint sleeping in Grecian fane
 Is ancient story, shrined in polished strain ;
 Truth views th' incongruous scene with stern fare-
 well,
 And startled Fancy weeps and breaks her spell.

CANTO I.

THE ABBEY.

Know ye that pale and ancient choir,
Whose Norman tower lifts its pinnacle to spire
Where the long Abbey-aisle extends
And battled roof o'er roof ascends ;
Cornered with buttresses, shapely and small,
That sheltered the Saint in canopied stall ;
And, lightened with hanging turrets fair,
That so proudly their dental coronals wear,
They blend with a holy, a warlike air ;
While they guard the Martyr's tomb beneath,
And patient warriors, laid in death ?

11.

Know ye that transept's far-stretched line,
Where stately turrets, more slenderly fine,
Each with a battlement round its brow,
Win the uplifted eye below ?

How lovely peers the soft blue sky
 Through their small double arch on high !
 Deepening the darkness of its shade,
 And seeming holier peace to spread."
 More grandly those turrets, mossed and hoar,
 Upon the crimson evening soar.
 Yet lovelier far their forms appear
 When they lift their heads in the moonlight air ;
 And softening beams of languid white
 Tip their shadowy crowns with light.
 But most holy their look, when a fleecy cloud
 O'er them throws its trembling shroud,
 Then palely thinly dies away,
 And leaves them to the full bright ray.
 Thus Sorrow fleets from Resignation's smile :
 The virtue lives—the suffering dies the while.

III.

And, as these moonlight-towers we trace,
 A living look, a saintly grace
 Beams o'er them, when we seem to hear
 The ~~midnight~~-hymn breathe soft and clear,
 As from this choir of old it rose.
 Each hallowed thought they seem to own,
 Expressed by music's heavenly tone ;

And patient, sad, and pale and still,
 As if resign'd to wait Time's will.
 Such choral swell and dying close
 Stole on the Abbot's hour of rest,
 Like solemn air from spirit blest,
 And shaped his vision of repose.
 The pious instinct of his soul,
 Not even slumber might controul :
 Soon as he caught the distant lay,
 His gathering thoughts half woke to pray
 Celestial smile came o'er his brow,
 Though sealed in sleep the lid below ;
 And, when in silence died the strain,

The lingering prayer

His lips forbear,

And deep his slumbers fall again.

IV.

Bold is this Abbey's front, and plain ;
 The walls no shrined saint sustain,
 Nor tower, nor airy pinnet crown ;
 But broadly sweeps the Norman arch
 Where once in brightened shadow shone
 King Offa, on his pilgrim-march
 And proudly points the mouldered stone

Of the high-vaulted porch beneath,
 Where Norman beauty hangs a wreath
 Of simple elegance and grace ;
 Where slender columns guard the space
 On every side, in clustered row,

The triple arch through arch disclose,
 And lightly-o'er the vaulting throw.

The thwart-rib and the fretted rose.
 Beside this porch, on either hand,
 Giant buttresses darkly stand,
 And still their silent vanguard hold
 For bleeding Knights, laid here of old ;
 And * Mercian Offa and his Queen
 The portal's guard and grace are seen.
 This western front shows various style.
 Less ancient than the central pile.
 No furrows deep upon its brow
 The frown of seven stern centuries show :
 Yet the sad grandeur of the whole
 Gives it such a look of soul,
 That, when upon it's silent walls
 The silvered grey of moonlight falls,

The busts of Offa and his Queen are at the springs of
 the arch of the great porch.

And the fixed image dim appears,
 It seems some shade of parted years
 Left watching o'er the mouldering dead,
 Who here for pious Henry bled,
 And here, beneath the wide-stretched ground
 Of nave, of choir, of chapels round,
 For ever—ever, rest the head.

v.

Now know ye this pale and ancient Choir,
 Where the massy tower lifts a slender spire ?
 Here forty abbots have ruled and one,
 Twenty with pall and mitre on,
 And bowed them to the Pope alone.
 Their hundred monks, in black arrayed,
 The Benedictine rules obeyed ;
 O'er distant lands they held their sway ;
 Freed from Peter's-pence were they ;
 The gift of palle from Pope they claimed,
 And Cardinal-Abbots were they named ;
 And even old Canterbury's lord
 Was long refused the premier board ;
 For this was the first British Martyr's bier.
 And the Pope said " His priest shall have no peer "
 Now know ye St. Alban's bones rest here.

VI. a

Kings and heroes here were guests
In stately halls, at solemn feasts.
But now, nor dais, nor halls remain ;
Nor fretted window's gorgeous pane
Twilight illuminated throws
Where once the high-served banquet rose.

VII.

No fragment of a roof remains
To echo back their wassail strains ;
But the long aisles, whose holy gloom
Still mourns and veils the martyr's tomb.
The broad grey tower, the turrets wide,
Scattered o'er tower and transept, guide
The distant traveller to their throne,
Where they high-seated watch alone,
And seem, with aspect sad, to tell,
That they of all their Abbey's power
Remain to point, where heroes fell,
And monarch met his evil hour,
And guileless, meek, and pious, bowed
To doubtful right's victorious crowd.

VIII.

Now, if this cloister, fallen and gone,
 Ye fain would view, as once it shone,
 Pace ye, with reverend step, I pray,
 The grass-grown and forgotten way,
 While murmurs low the fitful wind,
 Winning to peace the meek^en'd mind ;

And Evening, in her solemn stole,
 With stillness o'er those woods afar,
 Leads in blue shade her brightening star.

As spreads the slow gloom from the pole,
 And these old towers their watch more awful keep,
 (Where once the Curfew spoke with solemn rule)

And the faint hills and all the valley sleep
 In misty grey beneath the "dewy cool."

Yet, if a worldly heart ye wear,
 These visioned-shades forbear^o—forbear!
 To thee no dim-seen halls may gleam,
 For thee no hallowed tapers beam
 On the pale visage through the gloom
 Bending in prayer by shrine, or tomb.
 Turn thou thy wearied step away ;
 Go thou where dance and song are gay.

'Or where the sun is flaming¹ high,
 And leave these scenes to Evening's sigh.

IX.

But ye, with measured step and slow,
 Whose smile is shaded soft with woe ;
 And ye, who holy joy can know,
 The glow beyond all other glow.—
 Ye, whose high spirit dares to dwell
 Beyond the reach of earthly spell,
 And tread upon the dizzy verge
 Of unknown worlds ; or downward urge
 Through ages dim, your steadfast sight,
 And trace their shapes of shadowed light,
 O come " with meek submitted thought,"
 With lifted eye, by Rapture taught,
 And o'er your head the gloom shall rise
 Of monkish chambers, still and wide,
 As once they stood ; and to your eyes
 Group after group shall slowly glide,
 And here again their duties ply,
 As they were wont, long ages by,
 The twilight broods not yet so deep,
 But we may trace where now they sleep

Beneath the sullen turf aloof,
And where each solemn chamber's roof
Drew it's strong vaulting o'er their frames,
But urged on human praise no claims,
Nor always bore their living names.

x.

On yonder brow, that fronts the West,
Where glimmering beams in stillness rest,
Once rose the Abbot's Hall of Right,

That wont to view Ver's stream below
And shallow valley westward go

To farthest hills, that owned his might
And from those farthest hills were seen,
Through oaken boughs of stretching green,
The fretted window of that hall,
The pinnacle, that crowned it's wall,
And seemed to watch it's portal grey,
With crimson light tinged by the setting ray

xi.

Thus rose the Abbot's vaulted Hall,
Where he, in virtue of the palle,
Spoke doom to all his vassal throng ;
For life and death were on his tongue.

And scarce less ready to fulfill
His worldly, than his better will,
Were peasant, vavasour, and knight,
From London's wall to Beechwood's height.
His weighty robe of velvet fold
Was 'broidered round, and clasped with gold.
A Prior helped his office to sustain,
A hundred monks did dignify his reign.
Pale were they and closely shorn,
Heedless they were of human scorn
And arts that wait on human pride
In patience each with other vied.
'Mong such had Matthew Paris stood,
Pious, learned, wise and good,
Though shrouded in a bigot's hood.

XII.

Here, where the deeper shadows fall,
Once echoed o'er the paved hall
The weary step and staff of him,
Who, at this lonely hour and dim,
The last chill hour of eventide,
Had heard from yonder bleak hill side,

Where once stood Roman Verulam,
 Faint o'er the wintry waters come
 The bell of Compline, chiming slow
 From forth this Abbey's unseen tower,
 And spied, amid the shades below,
 The hearth-blaze in the stranger's bower :
 For here the Pilgrim's Lodge arose,
 Whose porch and hall and parlour warm
 And well-closed chambers of repose
 Received him from the rushing storm.

XIII.

And, when he reached the cheering blaze,
 How sweet to think upon those ways,
 As the shrill wind and sleety rain
 Against the casements strove in vain.
 But crowding thoughts soon chased repose,
 And nigh to sacred rapture rose,
 As now he knew himself so near
 The object of his long career,
 And, safely placed, where all around
 Was ancient, consecrated ground ;
 The precinct sought o'er sea and shore,—

The grave of him, whose sufferings o'er
Had now their glorious triumph found !

XIV.

There the Scriptorium spread it's gloom,
To dead and living, like one tomb ;
The living there like dead might show,
So mutely sat they, ranged in row ;
Scarce seen to move, from hour to hour,

Copying the written folio rare,
Or tracing bird, or curious flower,
Round blessed Mary in her bower.
In splendid gold and colours fair,
On missal leaf, with painful care,
Or portraiture of Donor good,
That, closely kept and seldom viewed,
Still fresh and glorious should be
For century following century.

XV.

Others there were, who volumes bound
In silk, or velvet, 'broidered round
And 'bossed with gold and gems of price,
Enclasped with emerald palm-leaf thrice.

On the high window near would shine,
 Transparent, the memorial line
 Of him, who once had wrought below,
 With patient hand and earnest brow ;
 Him, whose small pencil thus enshrined
 In book of GOLDEN RECORD true,
 The image and the noble mind,
 And thanks to benefactor due.
 There shadowed Kings and Abbots pass,
 In crowned pomp, or sweeping palie,
 Like spectres o'er some wizard's glass.
 There, as the lifted pages fall,
 They rise to view and disappear,
 As year steals silent after year,
 Till came the blank leaf, turned o'er all !
 Even o'er him, while here he wrought
 On the dull page the living thought.
 In after-time were here impressed
 Those wondrous characters combined,
 That stamp upon the paper vest
 At once, the image of the mind.
 The second Abbey this in all the land,
 That stretched to learning & preserving hand.

XVI.

Here cloister-walks, in spacious square,
Showed sacred story, painted fair,
And portraiture of famous men,
Who seemed to live and speak again,
In golden maxims from the walls.
Nobly these cloisters ranged along
By chapels, chambers, courts and halls,
Dividing from the cowled throng,
As with a dim and pillared aisle,
The Royal lodging's stately pile.
There the Queen's parlour, and her bower,
Hung o'er the sunny southern glade ;
And here the place of monarch-power
Gleamed through the Abbey's farther shade.
The foliaged arch, the well-carved door
Of chamber, hung from vault to floor
With storied scene, or cloth of gold,
Or 'broidered velvet's purple fold,
Rose beauteous to the taste of yore.
And slender shafts, entwined with flowers,
Lifted their high o'er-arching bowers,
Traced forth with mimic skill so true,
Kings seemed their Windsor's groves to view.

XVII.

The high-carved chimney's canopy
Spread broad o'er half a blazing tree,
With pinnacle and mitre wrought
And shielded arms of Mercia's court,
Three royal crowns ; and blazonry
Of many an abbot lying, near
In choir, or cloister, on his bier.
High in the midst a marble form
Stood in it's tabernacle shade,
Pale as the gleam of April storm ;
Oft was the passing monk afraid ;
So sternly watched the downcast eye !
Yet hardly might such monk know why.
On the brow a kingly crown it wore,
In it's hand a Mercian sceptre bore ;
'Twas Offa stood there on his fretted throne,
Whom these holy walls for their founder own,
Who Charlemagne for foe and friend had known.
And in that chamber, not in vain,
With mullions light and roial pane,
Rose th' oriel window's triple arch,
That pictured forth the solemn march
Of Offa, with his pilgrim train.

XVIII.

Within these walls there was one scene,
 Where worldly matters were discussed ;
 It was the Prior's cloister-green ;
 There ruled he, by the Abbot's trust.
 For not amid the noise of men,
 Disturbed by their familiar ken,
 Dwelt the Lord Abbot ; his recess
 Was little easy of access ;
 No ; by the southern transept rose
 (The shelves with store of learning fraught
 His Lodge and Cloister of repose,
 His bower, where all apart he sought.
 From convent-state and homage free,
 Leisure and learned dignity.

XIX.

Lost now that Study's farther shade,
 Whose peace no stray step might invade,
 Nor any sound of breathing life,
 Save when the Choir, in faint, sweet ~~strife~~
 Of voice and citole offering
 Praise, such as Angel-bands might sing.

In lessening chorus, on their way,
 Ascending to Eternal Day,
 Were heard with joyful murmuring,
 Their pure, harmonious strains to bring.
 It's deep, perspective shade is gone,
 That led, where the rich oriel shone,
 Where golden gloom the stained glass shed
 O'er the lone Abbot's bended head,
 As, sitting in his ebon chair,
 Lulled by sweet harmonies afar,
 He mused on death and life to come,
 The dawn of peace beyond the tomb,
 Or called back years, that o'er his head had rolled,
 And knew himself for ONE, WHOSE TALE IS TOLD !
 So still his form, so fixed his look,
 As dwelt his pale eyes o'er his book,
 So true, so clearly might you trace
 The lines of thought upon his face,
 He seemed some shade, that loves to dwell
 Where late it's mortal substance fell—
 To linger in the living scene,
 Where erst it's cares, it's joys had been ;
 The while each shuddering sigh of air,
 That breathed upon the ivy near,

Passed o'er the Vision's patient head,
Like whisper of the spirit fled.

XX.

Far distant rose those walls upon the light,
The stately walls, with tapestry richly dight,
Of th' Abbot's Banquet-hall, where, as on throne,
He sat at the high dais, like prince, alone,
Save when a Royal guest came here,
Or Papal Legate claimed a chair.

Here marble platforms, flight o'er flight,
Slow rising through the long-lined view,
Showed tables, spread at different height,

Where each for different rank he knew.
And, with pleased glance, adown the hall,
Saw Bishops in their far-sought palle,
The Abbey's noble Seneschal,
Barons and Earls, in gold array,
And warrior Knights, in harneys grey.
There was the Prior's delegated sway.
The grave Archdeacon sat betow,
And th' hundred Monks, in row and row ;
Not robed in dismal sable they

Upon a high and festal day,
 But all in copes most costly and most gay.
 There, too, the Abbey-Marshal shone,
 And there, beside the Abbot's throne,
 CHAPLAIN OF HONOUR from the Pope, alone.

XXI.

Thus the Lord-Abbot, were he proud,
 Might muse upon the chequered crowd ;
 Nor always did his mind disdain
 The worldly honours, though so vain.
 His board with massive plate was laid,
 And rare inventions it displayed ;
 Each sewer-monk his homage paid
 With bended knee and bowed head,
 And Latin verse, half sung, half said
 On every platform, as he rose
 Through the long hall to it's high close,
 Where frankincense from golden urns
 In light wreath round the Abbot burns.
 The chaunted Latin grace was sung
 With pomp of instruments, that rung
 The arched roofs and screens among.
 And, when a Royal guest was there,
 The Abbot, rising from his chair,

Blessed, with spread hands, the ordered feast,
 While reverend stood each princely guest,
 And far adown the hall might see
 Knights, Bishops, Earls, on bended knee.

XXII.

And when came up, at old Yule-tide,
 The boar's head, trimmed with garlands gay,
 With shining holly's scarlet pride,
 And the sweet-scented rosemary
 O! then what merry carols rung,
 What choral lays the minstrels sung!
 Marching before it through the hall,
 Led by the stately Seneschal.
 This was the joyous minstrel's call.
 In Leonine with English strung :

“ Canut Anri delero.

* * * *

“ The boar's head in hand bring I

“ With garlands gay and rosemary ;

“ I pray you, all sing merrily,

“ *Qui estis in convivio.*”

XXIII.

Then, every voice in chorus joined
 Of those who sat in festal row.

Your might have heard it on the wind—

Heard it o'er hills of desert snow.

Thence might be seen, in vale below,

Through windows of that Banquet-hall,

The mighty YULE-CLOUGH blazing clear,

And the Yule-Tapers, huge and tall,

Lighting the roofs with timely cheer.

But, ere a few brief hours were sped,

The blaze was gone—the guests were fled.

And heavy was the Winter's sigh,

As those lone walls it passed by.

XXIV.

Now, ere the Abbot's feast began,

Or yet appeared the crane and swan,

The solemn Carver, with his keen

Knife, and well armed with napkins clean,

Scarf-wise athwart his shoulder placed,

And on each arm and round his waist,

Came, led by Marshal, to the dais.

There every trencher he assays,

O'er the GREAT SALT makes flourishes,

Touches each spoon and napkin fair.

Assaying whether ill lurk there,

Ere he present it to his lord,
 Or offer it at the REWARDE.
 The Sewer, half-kneeling on his way,
 Of every dish receives assaye
 At the high board, as guard from guile.
 The Marshal waiting by the while,
 And ancient carols rising slow
 From the young Choir and Monks below.
 And thus, as every course came on,
 These pomps an awful reverence won.

xxv.

Soon as the last high course was o'er.
 The Chaplain from the cupboard bore,
 With viands from the tables stored.
 The ALMS-DISH to the Abbot's board,
 And ample loaf, and gavè it thence,
 With due form and good countenance.
 That th' Almoner might it dispense.
 Next came the Cup-bearers. with wine.
 Malmsey and golden metheglin,
 With spice-cake and with wafers fine.
 This o'er, when surnaps all were drawn,
 And solemn gr̄ace again was sung,

Came golden ewer and bason, borne
 In state to the high board along.

XXVI.

But, at high tide, ere all was past,
 Marched the huge Wassail-bowl the last
 Obedient to the Abbot's call,
 Borne by the Steward of the hall ;
 The Marshal with his wand before
 And streamers gay and rosemary,
 And choral carols sounding o'er.
 'Twas set beside the father's dais,
 Where oft the Deacon, in his place,
 Who bearer of the grace-cup was,
 Filled high the cordial Hippocras
 From out that bowl of spicery,
 And served the Abbot on his knee ;
 Then, sent around to every board
 This farewell-wassail from his lord.
 The Abbot, tasting of the wine,
 Rose from his chair, in wonted sign
 The feast was o'er ; yet stood awhile
 In cheerful converse with high guest,
 Who from the tables round him pressed

Then, with a kind and gracious smile,
 The wassail and the board he blessed,
 Ere yet he left the gorgeous scene,
 And sought the tranquil shade within.

XXVII.

Here, with proud grace, did Wolsey stand,
 Signing forth blessings with his hand,
 And oft the grace-cup had allowed
 To move among the willing crowd.
 Grandeur sat on his steadfast brow,
 'Mid high Imagination's glow ;
 He seemed to feel himself the lord
 Of all who sat beside his board,
 And, whether Peer, or Prince, or King,
 'Twas meet to him they homage bring ;
 And homage willed they, since his pride
 Had genius, judgement, taste, for guide.
 Which held it in such fine control,
 Pride seemed sublimity of soul.

XXVIII.

Short while the Abbot did repose,
 When he had left the Banquet-hall ;
 For soon, where his arched chamber rose,
 Would other pageant-scenes disclose

On days of convent festival.

Here, on the Martyr's annual feast
 When Obits at his shrine had ceased ;
 When GIVE-ALE and the DOLE were o'er ;
 When Robin Hood had left his bower,
 And in the Convent's spacious court
 The morrice-dancers ceased their sport,
 And on the rout was closed the Abbey-door ;
 Then torch and taper, blazing clear
 Within the Abbot's evening room,
 Banished the heavy, wintry gloom ;
 And Mysteries were acted here.
 Then, Chronicle of Kings, pourtrayed
 From England's story, long gone by,
 In mimic garb and scene arrayed
 Awoke the brethren's solemn sigh ;
 Such as we breathe o'er these, our theme,
 Whelmed in the ever-passing stream.

XXIX.

Here, too, the Minstrels' chaunted song
 Told of their sainted Alban's fate ;
 But, oft the measure wound along
 With tales of Chivalry's high state,

Of knights, of ladies and of love,
 Ambition's eagle, Beauty's dove,
 And many a lay of Holy Land,
 Of Richard's and of Edward's band:
 The harpers, in the noble train
 Of Abbey guest, oft joined the strain ;
 And, as they woke with fire the lay,
 Or bade it's moving grief decay,
 Each silent monk, with look attent,
 His head, unhooded, thoughtful, bent.
 Then might you watch, in the stern eye,
 The busy, fretful passions die,
 Such as in gloom and loneliness dwell,
 Gnawing the bosom's vital cell,
 And spreading poison through the soul,
 That yields to their malign control.

XXX.

'Twas sweet the softened mind to trace
 Beaming upon time-hardened face,
 Won by still harmony to rest ;
 And all unconscious of the tear,
 That, stranger to such brow severe,
 Upon the closing eyelid pressed.

But sweeter 'twas to mark the smile
 Of the blind Minstrel o'er the strings ;
 Darkness, nor want, he knows the while,
 As wide the storied verse he flings ;
 For Music can all wants beguile,
 With bright perception chase his night,
 And can awake that glow of heart,
 Affection's dearest smiles impart ;
 For Music is—the blind man's light !
 The beam, that does to mental ray
 Image and sentiment display,
 The world of passion, living thought,
 All that the mind through sight ere sought.
 Then sigh not, that he dwells in night,
 For he hath Music for his light !

XXXI.

This vaulted chamber once was lined
 With arras rich, where stood combined
 The story of Cologne's Three Kings,
 With other far-famed ancient things.
 Yet oft, on solemn festival,
 A deeper tale spoke from the wall,
 Such as might aid the mimic show
 Enacted on the scene below ;

Where the raised platform, near the Bay,
 Served well for ~~stage~~. That oriel gay
 Rose with light leaves and columns tall,
 Mid roial glass and fretwork small ;
 While tripod lamps from the coved roof
 Showed well each painted mask aloof,
 Lanfranc and Saxon Edward there,
 Watching the scene they once could share.

XXXII.

That oriel shed bright influence
 And charm, by its magnificence,
 On all there told by eye, or tongue,
 Morality, or Mystery,
 Or Founder's boon, or History.
 In front, the velvet curtain, flung
 In folds aside, not then for shade,
 Or shelter, as when winds invade,
 Made graceful ornament between
 The roof and the fictitious scene.
 How different from this festal grace,
 How fit it's blandishments to chase,
 Were the long vistas, ranging here
 Of the Great Cloister's pillared square.

XXXIII.

And when could festal joy e'er vie
 With the calm rapture of the sigh
 Breathed in that Cloister's solemn shade,
 When the lone monk would muse and read
 And meditate on ancient lore,

Or view the warrior on his tomb,
 With raised hands seeming to implore

Of Heaven a mitigated doom?
 So shaded would such figure lie,

Tall arches pointing o'er the head,
 That, though a window, placed on high,

It's gleam through distant colours shed,
 So dim would lie in shades below,

That, whether living shape, or dead,
 The monk, who gazed, might hardly know.

And often, at the midnight-watch,
 (The shrine-watch in the aisle beside)

His ear tent low sound would catch,
 That stole along the tomb and died,
 As though he had some holy word
 In whisper from the marble heard!

Followed a stillness all profound ;
 Was it some spirit from the ground
 That breathed a spell of death around ?
 If the monk watched some little space,
 Life would seem trembling o'er the face !
 The pallid stone would change it's hue,
 And tremble to his doubting view !

XXXIV.

Gone is that Cloister's shadowy walk,
 Where the more aged would pace and talk.
 Or, resting in the well-carved nook,
 Leisurely read the rare LENT BOOK,
 Turning each page with reverend care.
 Th' illuminator's work to spare ;
 Or tell some legend of a saint,
 Or allegory, little worth,
 Of monkish virtues pictured forth
 In leonine, of Latin quaint.
 Whate'er it were, 'twas fine repose,
 In cloister-shade, at evening close,
 To lean along that oaken seat,
 And, all enwrapt in quiet gloom,

Hear the still Vesper, rising sweet
 From sainted Oswyn's shrine and tomb,
 Or Obit from the chantry near
 Of the good Abbot Delamere,
 Swell faint and die upon the ear.
 And solemn 'twas and sweet, the while,
 To mark upon some distant aisle,
 Seen through deep arch of transept-door,
 The streaming torch-light break the shade,
 Strike the tall arches over head,
 Or, slanting low that long aisle o'er,
 Show, some dim sepulchre before,
 The lonely, duteous mourner there,
 Kneeling and veiled in watch of prayer.

XXXV.

There, ranged around in silent guard,
 Seventeen kings yet watch and ward
 The good Duke Humphrey's mouldering form,
 Here rescued from the earthly storm,
 Raised by a rival—now a worm !
 And, when the midnight chaunts were still,
 Strange sounds the vault below would fill.

A ghastly shade, with mitred head,
 Has stalked, that lonely tomb around,
 And knelt upon the honoured ground,
 With hands upon its white palle spread,
 In seeming prayer and penance lost ;
 'Twas guessed this was a murderer's ghost
 Condemned to wander round the grave
 Of him, whom kindness could not save.
 There were, who in that shade could see
 (Or 'twas the moonbeam's mockery)
 Beaufort of cruel memory !
 Such look as dying he had shown,
 When hope of Heaven he did not own,
 And Horror stared beside his bed ;
 Such grisly look this visage had.

'XXVI.

And, at such hour, was sometimes seen,
 Veiled in flin shadowy weeds of woe,
 The image of a stately Queen,
 Near the cold marble pacing slow.
 The crown upon her hair gleamed faint,
 And more of heroine than saint
 Was drawn upon her lofty brow.

The proud, heroic graces there,
 The grandeur of her step and air,
 No softer charms of pity share.
 Alas ! that such commanding mind
 Were not with truth and mercy joined !
 Now, were her look, her eye of fire,
 That once could warlike bands inspire,
 Dimmed with the tear of vain remorse :
 Far less had been a kingdom's loss,
 Than loss of holy innocence ,
 So said her fixed and anguished countenance.

XXXVII.

But Margaret's moan, nor Beaufort's word,
 Was heard at Vesper's hallowed hour
 To musing monk, in cloister-bower ;
 Pious sounds alone he heard,
 And listened oft, with saintly smile,
 When Autumn's gale swept o'er the aisle,
 And bore the swelling hymn away
 Up to the realms of heavenly day !
 But, when the fitful gust was gone,
 Rose that strain with a sweeter tone ;
 The hymn of Peace it seemed to be—
 Her hushed and meekest minstrelsy—

Her welcome to the Just, when free
 From this short world of misery.
 The monk, who listened, many a still tear shed,
 By trembling Hope and blessed Pity fed ;
 The listener's self how soon among the dead !

XXXVIII.

But who the Changing scenes may tell,
 This Abbey's ancient walls have known !
 When London tolled the Plague's death-bell,
 Justice here held her courts alone ;
 Here, in this nave, was placed her throne.
 An earlier age showed scenes more dread,
 For shrines and tombs around were spread
 With bleeding knights and nobles dead.
 Next age, the latter Henry's bands
 Each consecrated altar spoiled,
 Seized on the Abbey' ample lands,
 And recklessly for plunder toiled.
 Then, nearer to the living day,
 Here other spoilers bore the sway,
 Who, feigning Reason for their guide,
 Indulged an impious, bigot pride.

All arrogant in their chicane,
 They dared these reverend walls profane.
 Then Cromwell's bands on grave-stones lay,
 And storied brasses tore away ;
 The sculptured marble tombs defaced
 Of those, who, nameless, sleep below ;
 That the tall arch, with webwork traced
 That shadowed form of Prophet graced,
 Was shattered by their impious blow.

XXXIX.

Of all this Abbey's ample bound
 One outer arch alone is found,
 To mark the Convent's stately port,
 The entrance of the western court,
 Beneath whose arch have passed the trains
 Of Kings succeeding Kings, when strains
 From trump and clarion, as from fort,
 Have shook the massy walls around,
 And startled with the warrior-sound
 The penanced monk, in distant cell,
 (He had his long beads twice to tell,
 Nor knew what form he muttered then,)—
 While forth, to meet their Sovereign,

The Abbot and his convent paced,
 With time-worn banners, ranged in haste.

XL.

Then from the convent-hall within
 Faint might be heard the joyous din
 Of minstrel-harp and choral voice,
 That for the royal-guest rejoice ;
 And then the painted window bright,
 Lighting, on high, the murky night,
 And showing portraiture of Saint,
 Kind signal to the Pilgrim faint ;
 But to the robber, in his cell
 Of giant-oak, it told too well,
 That richly-dight and jewelled guest
 Would late return to distant rest.
 The darkened vale and subject-town
 Viewed such bright vision with a frown
 And murmured, that the tyrant knell
 Of iron Curfew should compel
 Their homes to sink in sudden night.
 When E'en the turret, whence it spoke
 Insulting those who owned the yoke,
 Lifted it's brow, all ruddy bright,
 Flushed from the Abbey-Hall's strong light.

XLI.

But, though these lighted halls are gone,
 And darkly stands that tower and lone,
 The sacred temple still endures ;
A truer worship it secures.
And, though the gorgeous shrines are o'er,
 And their pale watch-monks now no more
 Though torch, nor voice, from chantry-tomb.
 Break, solemn, through the distant gloom ;
 Though pilgrim-trains no more ascend
Where far-seen arches dimly bend,
 And fix in awe th' admiring eye
 Upon the Martyr's crown, on high,
 And watch upon his funeral-bed ;
Nor hundred Monks, by Abbot led,
 Through aisle and choir, by tomb and shrine,
 Display the long-devolving line,
 To notes of solemn minstrelsy,
 And hymns, that o'er the vaulting die
Yet, we here feel the inward peace,
 That in long-reverenced places dwells ;
Our earthly cares here learn to cease ;
 The Future all the Past expels.

And still, so solemn falls the shade,
 Where once the weeping Palmer prayed.
 We feel, as o'er the graves we tread,
 His thrill of reverential dread.

XLII.

Thou silent Choir, whose only sound
 Is whispering step o'er graves around.
 Or echo faint from vault, on high,
 Of the poor redbreast's minstrelsy,
 Who, perched on some carved mask of stone,
 By lofty gallery dim and lone,
 Sends sweet, short note, but sparsely heard,
 That sounds e'en like the farewell word
 Of some dear friend, whose smile in vain
 We seek through tears to view again!
 Thou holy shade—unearthly gloom!
 That hoverest o'er the Martyr's tomb;
 Ye awful vaults, whose aspect wears
 The ghastliness of parted years!
 The very look, the steadfast frown,
 That ye on ages past sent down,
 Strange, solemn, wonderful and dread,
 Pageant of living and of dead;—

Thou silent Choir! thou holy shade!
 Ye walls, that guard the Martyr's head,
 Meet agents are ye to inspire
 The lone enthusiast's thought of fire;
 High ministers of Alban's fame,
 Ye are his tomb, and breathe his name.

XLIII.

And when, enthroned on field of war,
 This Abbey's walls are seen afar,
 When it's old dark-drawn aisles extend
 Upon the light; and, bold and broad,
 The central tower is seen t' ascend,
 And sternly look their sovereign lord,
 We feel again such transports rise,
 As fixed that way-worn Palmer's eyes,
 When, gaining first the toilsome brow,
 Rose to his sight the Shrine below,
 When, as he caught it's aspect pale,
 He shouted "Alban! Martyr! hail!"
 And knelt and wept, and kissed the long-sought
 ground.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO II.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE FIRST BATTLE.

I.

AMIDST these old abodes of peace
Did War his crimson banner rear.
And bid the heavenly anthem cease.
While his stern trumpets rent the air:
Here, in each cloister, hall and walk,
Where sandalled feet unheard went by,
And voices low, in reverend talk,
Feared to disturb it's sanctity,
Did here the Warrior's iron tread
Shake the cold slumber of the dead,
Call murmurs from the vaults below
And the long whispered sigh of woe;
Stalk o'er the helpless and the good,
And print the hermit's vest with blood.

Yes ; blood the hallowed pavement stained ;
And blood the shrine of peace prophaned !
The ring of mail—the clash of steel
Through choir and cloister sent their peal
To chambers dim, where Silence slept,
And pious men their sabbath kept,
Who, long secure from sense of ill,
And well subdued in mind and will,
Pondered Futurity's high theme
And this world's strange and fleeting dream.

II.

O day of guilt and bleeding woe !
Year after year shall mourn in vain
The countless ills, that from ye flow,
And hardly hope for peace again—
The day, when York and Lancaster,
First loosed the tide of civil war ;
When hostile brothers of the land
Met face to face, and hand to hand,
And sunk each other's lance beneath,
And breathed each other's dying breath !

III.

The eve before that battle day,
 The camp of either army lay
 Beyond where now the straining sight
 Can reach from Alban's utmost height.
 'Twas leaning on this very tower,
 That Alban's Monks watched hour by hour.
 They, who lie dark in death below
 Yon fallen walls, in silent row
 Gazed, as you gaze, from this high brow.
 The cowl and helmet, side by side,
 Watched from this height the bannered pride,
 And marked the gathering storm of war
 Hang dark o'er all those hills afar ;
 And, in dread stillness of the soul,
 Heard the low, threatening thunder roll,
 That soon would, in it's cloudy course,
 Burst round their walls with lightning-force.

IV.

Camped o'er those green and northern lands,
 There lay Duke Richard's way-worn bands ;
 The pale rose on their ensigns stood.

Southward, where now the clear sun shines,
Watched Royal Henry's warrior-lines,
 Surmounted with the rose of blood.
His vanguard lay beneath these halls,
And round St. Stephen's neighbouring walls.
To Cashio's vale his centre spread,
Where the King pressed a thorny bed.
His legions stretched toward Stanmore's brow
 And Harrow's lofty sanctuary,
Whose spiry top you just may know,
 Crowned with many a stately tree,
 Where now the gleam falls fleetingly.
The lights and shades of Fortune's power
Fell not as Nature's at this hour.
Her storm frowned on the southern scene ;
Her smile shone o'er yon flowery green.
Those distant downs, now dim and grey,
Those misty woods received her ray.

v.

While the Monks from this battlement
Their glance o'er the wide prospect sent,

They watched the western sun go down
'Mid clouds of amber, edged with gold,
That did their splendid wings unfold,
And seemed to wait around his throne.
A monk, who marked them, dared foretell,
That gentle Peace would here still dwell ;
But the bold guess and flattering ray
Sunk alike in gloom away.
One crimson streak of parted day
Lingered where HENRY'S army lay ;
Till o'er it spread the night's dark hue,
That veiled awhile each camp from view.

VI.

Then, gradual, through the deepening gloom,
Torch and signal-fires relume
The war-lines on the hills and dells,
Leaving wide shadowy intervals ;
Yet marking to the distant eye
How broad and close those camp-lines lie :
Gleaming as does the Ocean's bed,
When sun has set in stormy red,
And surge on surge rolls crested bright,
Beneath the glance of parting light.

VII.

The other camp, of smaller force,
Concealed it's boundary by the course
Of heights, save where one hill retired ;
There was the dusk with redness fired
By casual watch-torch through the gloom :
And there lay York, like hidden doom,
Waiting to send forth nameless woes.
High o'er that hill the blaze arose
Upon the darkly-sullen sky,
Here reddening on a livid cloud,
There glancing like the fancied crowd,
That ride the northern lights on high.
Duke Richard watched upon this hill,
While his camp-field was dark and still ;
But that a guard-fire, here and there,
Lifted it's lonely fitful glare,
Where steeds and warriors lay around,
 In harness for the battle-day,
Half-slumbering to the frequent sound
Of steps and weapons on the ground,
 Preparing for the morrow's fray.

His scouts near Henry's army strolled,
And to his gathered Council told
Where lay it's weakness, where it's hold.
But HENRY, trusting to his force,
Scorned such dark cares and secret course.

VIII.

So near the outer posts approached,
That each on each 'at times encroach'd,
And speech of taunt, or civil cheer,
Mixed with the clink of harness-gear,
Was heard ; and each might view the flare
From Alban's topmost round in air,
That made the tower, in lurid gloom,
A more gigantic port assume.
And, silent, on the rocky steep
Their watch o'er hill and valley keep.
Each, too, might see dim forms on high,
Glide, where the beacon touched the sky :
For there it's flame of sullen red
Flashed on a cowed monk's sable head,
Glanced on the Abbey-knight beside,
And showed his plummy crest of pride.

On the night-breezes dancing gay,
As though in sun and chivalry.

IX.

That monk and knight, with steady gaze,
Watched where the far-off signals blaze,
O'er many a ridge of wood and down,
From heath and camp, from tower and town ;
From ancient Hadley's cresset-flame,

That peered o'er hills, an eastern star,
(The beacon-turret still the same)

Bearing this sign of iron war
To Cashio's close-surrounded vale
And Gorhambury's turrets pale,
And nameless lands, in shade unknown.
The nearer scene they looked upon,
Glimmer'd in varying shade and light,
Thrown from the Abbey's beacon bright.

X.

It gleam'd on stately bowers below,
Ting'd porch and transept's dusky bow,
Glared on broad courts and humble cell,
Glanced on the crystal Oriel.

And cast deep shadow on the ground
 From gates and turrets ranged around.
 There, Abbey Lance-men slowly paced,
 Where scarce the portal-arch was traced,
 As flashed the blaze along the air,
 And quivered on each Warrior's spear ;
 Long, shaded walks it showed, that led
 Where cloister-plat and gardens spread,
 And monks, wrapt close in sable weed,
 Passed to and fro, with ⁱⁿ fearful speed.
 The gloomy light was thrown so far,
 It reddened dark St. Michael's brow,
 Frowning on Roman foss below,
 And tinged the bridge and streams of Ver.

XI.

St. Alban's town, with wakeful eyes,
 Viewed the red beacon sink and rise,
 And, sought to spell' each signal sent
 To good King HENRY'S distant tent.
 And, while they gazed, the changing glare,
 Broad on each roof and lattice-bar,
 Showed every visage watching there
 For tidings of the threatened war.

Upon Queen Ellen's p^lae of state,
That crowned the town and m^ourned her fate,
The trembling gleam touched shrine and saint
With light and shade, so finely faint,
The form beneath each canopy
Appeared to lean so patiently,
As if it bent o'er the loved bier,
That, once for short time placed here,
Had made the spot to Edward dear,
And listened, while the Requiem's flow
Shed stillness o'er the mourner's woe.

XII.

Patient upon the Abbey-Tower,
From Vesper to the Matin hour,
The knight and monk the first watch kept,
While few beneath their vigil slept.
Later, within the turret-head
The monk from the chill night-wind fled ;
But never from that platform's height
Strayed the due footstep of the knight.
With patient eye and measured pace,
He turned upon the narrow space,

And listened each imperfect sound,
 That rose from camp, or road, around,
 Or noise of preparation made
 Below in porch and arch-way shade.
 The massy bolts and ponderous bars
 Of studded gates, that, in old wars,
 Against the rebel townsmen closed,
 Had now so long in peace reposed,
 So long had been unmoved by hand,
 They now the Warder's might withstand
 Often was heard the mingled din
 From clink of smith and voice within.
 From footsteps heavy with the weight
 Of chest, that bore from shrines a freight.
 And altar-tombs, to secret hold
 Of jewels rich and cups of gold ;
 Though yet was left some little show
 To check, if need, the plunderer's blow.

XIII.

And, when such busy sounds were o'er,
 That Abbey-knight might hear once more
 From the still street, in echoing swell,

The watch-word of each sentinel
Pass on it's far-extending range
From post to post, with ordered change,
Now low, now sullen, and now high,
"Health to the King!"—then "So say I."
And sometimes, too, a distant drum,
With stealthy murmur seemed to come,
Then rolled away, and sunk afar
Where slept the thunder-cloud of war.
From roads was heard and doubted ground
The watch-cry of patrols around,
Mingled, at times, with one slow note,
Swelled solemn from the cornet's throat,
And answered faint and fainter still,
Like echo from the distant hill.
And, when such solemn sounds were past,
When slumbered e'en the midnight blast,
The due hymn from the choir below
Through the high tower ascended slow,
While round the bands of Havock lay,
Waiting but for the morn of May
To light War, Death, and Treason to their prey.

XIV.

The Knight sent frequent message down,
 That all was still,
 No sign of ill
 Drew nearer to St. Alban's town.
 The while the Abbot, in debate,
 Sat with his officers of State,
 And Seneschal, Judge of his Court,
 Discussing every new report
 And message, sent from scouts afar,
 That told the visage of the war.
 Vainly for some they waited long,
 Perplexed Duke Richard's hosts among ;
 Others came, horse on horse, so fast,
 That every quarter-watch that passed,
 Brought rumour fresh and wond'rous tale,
 Bidding now hope, now fear, prevail,
 And still most wond'rous ever was the last.

XV.

The pious Abbot, Whetchampsted.
 Of learned men the learned head,
 Closed a late council, and withdrew,
 Needful, though short repose to woo ;

But still the Prior and Seneschal
 Waited the worst, that might befall,
 Ready, if enemy approach,
 For council at the Abbot's couch.
 He, wakeful long and anxious still,
 Lost not in sleep his sense of ill,
 For then, in slumbers, touched with sorrow,
 He saw dim visions of the morrow,
 Saw round those walls the battle bleed ;
 Heard the fierce tramp and neigh of steed ;
 Saw wounded Henry, in the strife,
 Borne down and pleading for his life,
 And, starting at the piteous view,
 He woke, with chill brow bathed in dew.

xvi.

That night, few monks their pallets pressed
 And scarce an eye was closed in rest ;
 Most were from slumber held away
 By terror of the coming day ;
 Yet some there were, who, fond of change
 And slaves to envy, wished to see

The battle take it's direst range,
 Though round their walls it chanced to be,
 And some, who, fired with worldly zeal,
 Would fain, with casque and sword of steel,
 Mingle in royal Henry's train;
 And others Richard's plea maintain.
 But each, by prudent council swayed
 Or policy, their chief obeyed.
 The ordered chime was hourly rung;
 Each mass was duly said and sung;
 And, at each gate, though armed band
 Obeyed an Abbey-knight's command,
 And o'er the posterns had control,
 Yet, at each station watched a cowl,
 And still on tower, half hid in hood,
 The pale Monk with the Warrior stood.

XVII.

That Monk had heard the Vesper-bell
 Call every brother from his cell;
 Had heard the bell of Compline sound,
 And followed every service round;

And as he heard each chaunt ascend,
 Silent and meek, his head would bend ;
 Each word th' accustomed mind supplied,
 That distance to his ear denied ;
 Though absent he, by painful need,
 He joined the prayer and dropped the bead.
 And oft, in silent orison,
 He prayed, that war might spare this town ;
 That all who dwelt within these walls
 Might duly own Religion's calls
 On the unknown to-morrow's night,
 Now trembling on his darkened sight.
 He prayed, too, that no blood-stained grave
 Might wait that watching Warrior brave,
 Whose spirit frank and free and kind
 Had calmed and cheered his boding mind.

XVIII.

Still Jerome leaned on Alban's tower,
 And thoughtful watched the solemn hour ;
 All things lay wrapt in fearful gloom ;
 Time passed in silence toward the tomb.

Nor watch-dog's bark, nor charger's neigh,
 Nor pass-word went the distant way ;
 Nor swept a breeze upon a bough
 Of the high leafy walks below.
 The holy hymn had sunk in peace ;
 Now Nature's breathings almost cease
 In the deep pause alone might come
 The sullen, faltering pant of drum ;
 So faint th' uncertain sound in air,
 It seemed like pulse within the ear.

- XIX.

He viewed the dawn steal o'er the wold,
 Paling each beacon-fire afar,
 Till, wan and dim as twilight star,
 The warning tale no more it told.
 On the green woods that dewy light
 Shed sleepy hues all chill and white.
 That cold fresh light, that tender green,
 Dawning through all the lonely scene,
 A sweet and quiet sadness wrought
 To palmer, journeying at such hour
 Through the wild path of forest-bower,

Well suiting with his humbled mind,
 In holy grief to Heaven resigned.
 If it recalled the long-past thought,
 It soothed to smile the woe it brought :
 Like touch of some fine harmony,
 To one endued with sympathy.

XX.

With pious thought and tranced eye,
 St. Alban's Monk, from turret high,
 Beheld in silent order rise
 Tint after tint on th' eastern skies:
 First, cold rays edged the night's black shroud ;
 Then rose, then amber, changed the hue ;
 Then slowly purpled the soft cloud,
 That stretched along the upper blue ;
 Where, hanging o'er its shadowy throne,
 The star of Morning watched alone ;
 But soon more gorgeous tints appear,
 And tell the mighty Sun is near ;
 Till he looked joyous o'er you brow,
 While slumbering War lay stretched below,
 Whose shrine shall dying thousands stain,
 Ere that gay Sun look up again !

XXI.

War's grisly visage there was seen,
 Engarlanded with May's fair buds ;
 His couch—her meads of springing green,
 His canopy—her fresh-leaved woods !
 Her fragrant airs around him breathe,
 Her music soothes his dream beneath.
 But soon May's blooms their snows shall yield,
 By hostile struggle lowly laid ;
 And soon her young and lightsome shade
 Shall hide the blood-stained casque and shield,
 Now thrown in wilder'd flight away :
 And many a tortured wretch that day,
 'Scaped from the battle's mortal strife,
 To scenes of Nature's peace shall hie ;
 And, while all round is breathing life,
 Sink on some flowery bank and die !

XXII.

The Monk might, at this hour of dawn,
 Have traced each army faintly drawn,
 Through dewy veil, on hills around ;
 And viewed St. Alban's glimmering bound
 All rich with blooming orchard ground,

Where crowded roofs and turrets lay
Obscurely on the brightening grey.
How dark and still the Martyr's tower
 Stood on the reddening dawn on high ;
How solemn was the look it wore,
 The peace of age and sanctity !
Till each dark line stood sharp and clear,
On gold and crimson streaks of air.
Flowing upon the early breeze,
The Royal banner WARWICK sees
Wave homage to the rising beams !
And, while that banner lightly streams,
With scornful eyes he viewed the town,
" There will I rule ere sun go down !"

XXIII.

The Knight and Monk, who watched on high,
Beheld these rising beams with joy ;
And lost, with joy, the beacon's flame,
For now relief of Warder came.
Scarce would the warrior pause to tell,
That all near Alban's wall was well ;
Or change a word of what had been ,
From his high station heard, or seen.

And, with the chilling hour oppressed,
Jerome, too, sought some welcome rest,
And left, exchanged, a monk behind,
To shiver in the breezy wind.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO, III.

THE DAY OF THE FIRST BATTLE.

THE day had risen ; the song of Prinite
Swelled soft, as ceased the second chime ;
When now was heard a distant drum
Through the wood-lands high to come ;
And, fierce though faint, one trumpet-blast
Hurrying upon the light wind passed.
It was not fancy—'twas not fear,
That caused those glittering helms appear,
And triple-glance of marshalled spear,
Upon the high wood's shadowy side ;
'Tis there the barbed couriers ride ;

And, mid the light-leaved shadows go
 The battle-axe and lance and bow ;
 And banners bright and pennons fair
 Bicker upon the fretful air.
 Now, down St. Stephen's woody steep,
 The warlike bands due order keep,
 Winding in glimpses to his eye
 Who watched from under hood, on high,
 And sadly lost all doubt, in fear ;
 While now the 'larum-bell he rung,
 And now o'er battlement he hung,
 Viewing the lengthened train draw near ;
 " Ten thousand,—less there could not be ;
 Ten thousand of the enemy ;"
 And thousands yet he might not see !

II.

His glad companion smiling heard
 The panic marvels of his word ;
 But all in vain he promised good,
 Though, as they flashed from Julian's wood,
 The knight well knew those armed bands,
 And brandished high his gauntlet-hands,

And shouted welcomes on the gale,
 " Live—live King Henry—Henry hail !"
 And waved his banner on the wall,
 Urging the loud, rejoicing call,
 " Live—live King Henry—Henry hail !"
 Till his parched lips and utterance fail.

III.

And then was heard the various pace
 Of young and old, in toilsome race
 Up galleried wall and winding flight,
 Aiming to reach this topmost height.
 But soon th' embattled roofs below
 Proclaim, that few may gain this brow
 For, resting there in sable row,
 Many a brother breathless stood
 With pointing hand and falling hood,
 Gazing upon the vision dread
 Of warlike force, that hither sped.

IV.

Now, loud King Henry's clarions sound,
 The many-trampling hoofs rebound,
 As, issuing from St. Stephen's shade
 Upon the near and sunny glade,

Blazoned shields and helmets gleam,
While light the red-rose banners stream ;
And knights on barbed coursers bear
Their monarch's standard through the air.
And gentle Henry might you know,
Though harnessed close from top to toe.
Before him, herald-trumpets sound,
Proud chiefs and nobles press the ground ;
And, where his ordered thousands throng,
Winding the woods and vale along,
Each bannered knight, as he drew nigh,
Was seen to lead his vassal-band,
With statelier march and aspect high,
Expressive of supreme command,
Though courting kindly gesture from his Sovereign's
hand.

v.

Loud and more loud the trumpets call,
As they draw nigh St. Alban's wall ;
And other trumpets answer clear,
And " Live King Henry !" rends the air,
From every guarded barrier.

Straight, at the sound, in street below,
 The thronging shield and helmet go,
 While busy knights their men array,
 To line their Monarch's onward way,
 The van-guard, that, on yesternight,
 Watched here, upon St. Alban's height.
 Above, each roof and lattice showed
 A fearful and a curious crowd,
 Though forced within their homes to stay,
 Hoping for glorious wonders, on that day.

VI.

And now adown the street appear,
 With better banners, high on air,
 The Martyr's sons in wondering fear,
 With chaunted anthems, grave and sweet,
 Facing their Sovereign lord to meet.

The Abbot is not now arrayed.

As he was wont, to meet his lord ;
 His brow no jewelled pomp displayed,
 Nor from his shoulders now floats broad
 The scarlet cope, nor robe of gold,
 Nor the rich velvet's shadowy fold.

But he, enwrapt in woeful weed,
 Suiting his habit to the time,
 In sorrowing penance seems to plead
 Forgiveness for some hidden crime,
 That threatened to draw judgment down
 Even on St. Alban's shrine and town.
 But pages hold his mourning train,
 As when arrayed in robe more vain,
 And all his officers of state
 In order due around him wait ;
 While, marching on the crowded way,
 His Abbey-knights their band display.

VII.

Far down the steep of Holywell,
 The chaunted anthem rose and fell.
 Soon as was heard the solemn song,
 And seen the dark advancing throng ;
 That busy street, then closely pressed,
 With bow and pike and demi-lance,
 Where charger reared, where waved high crest.
 Was hushed, at once, as if in trance ;
 The crowd fell back, in order grave,
 Ere Abbot's guard the signal gave,

And, as the Abbey-Choir went by,
 In reverend row you there might see
 Each warrior on his bended knee,
 With upward and beseeching eye.
 And thus, through files of lance and spear,
 The pious fathers, without fear,
 On to the southern barrier move
 Safe in due reverence and love.

VIII.

And now within the barrier wall
 St. Alban's sons await their King.
 And hark ! what nearer clarions ring !
 What shouts around each turret call
 ' King Henry live !—King Henry live !
 Every Saint a blessing give ;
 King Henry live !—King Henry live !
 Abbot and Prior blessings give ;"
 Then burst the loud, acclaiming voice
 From battlements and towers aloof,
 From cottage-thatch and lordly roof,
 Of all, who in due rule rejoice.

IX.

Then, first from forth the barrier-arch
 Deep and dark, in solemn march,
 The Herald-trumpets come ;
 Their blazoned coats and pageantry
 And banners beam upon the eye,
 Like sudden blaze of witchery
 From depth of midnight gloom.
 Behind, a pale and gleaming band,
 As if by glance of moonlight shown,
 Stalked, in silence, hand by hand,
 With threatening crest and visor's frown
 The stately forms of men unknown.
 In cold dead steel anatomized,
 As in Death's very image 'guised.

X.

Following this heavy march were seen,
 On the armed charger's stately sheen,
 Many a Baron's youthful son,
 By lofty SOMERSET led on.
 With stately step his courser trod ;
 His casque the British lion strode ;
 The triple plume was nodding by ;

Through the barred visor might you spy
The warrior's dark and fiery eye,

Though not the mien his visage bore.
Proud was his air, his stature high.

Above his ringed mail he wore
Coat-armour, blazoned bright with sign
Of princely birth and Henry's line,
And 'broidered with devices fair ;
Portcullis-bars in gold were there.
Two Squires, beside his stirrups, bear
His shield and axe and new-shod spear.
There marched in stately grace before,

With trumpets that high summons gave,

His Pursuivant, Portcullis' grave,
And Henchmen next, some demi-score.
Fearless, he sought the battle-hour ;
Here he beheld not castle-tower,
And well he knew the prophecy,
That UNDER CASTLE HE MUST DIE.

XI.

Behind, as far as eye might go,
Paced barbed steeds and banners slow.
Till Henry's standard stooped below

The barrier-arch, and borne along
 By royal Banner Knights a throng ;
 So heavy was the ample fold,
 That hardly could the knights unfold
 The crimson silk and blazoned gold.
 Again came Heralds, four abreast,
 With blazoned arms and yellow vest,
 Sounding their silver trumpets sweet,
 While silver drums before them beat.
 Followed a gorgeous stately train,
 Who scarcely might their coursers rein,
 Esquires and Yeomen, two and two,
 Accoutred at all points, most true ;
 Knights of the Body, brave and gay,
 Who ushered Henry on his way,
 While 'compassing, on all sides, came
 Chiefs and Nobles, high in fame.

XII.

Thronged lofty spears and shields around,
 Where the King's charger trod the ground,
 And, deep behind the barrier-arch,
 Plume behind plume, in solemn march,

And eyes that seemed to frown with fate,
Upon their monarch's progress wait.
"Then gentle Henry might you know,
Though harnessed close from head to toe ;"
For, though arrayed for warrior-deed,
He sat not cheerly on his steed ;
Though England's lion on his brow
Claimed homage of a Nation's bow.

XIII.

Soon as St. Alban's sons he spied
He drew his rein, and "Halt !" was cried ;
And when the reverend father kneeled,
He pressed his iron beaver down,
And would not let his visor frown,
But all his countenance revealed,
And stretched his gracious hand to raise
The aged man with gentle praise.
And when the blessed anthems pealed,
He would himself have stept to ground,
And with the Abbot, side by side,
Have yielded up all kingly pride,
To pace the Martyr's tomb around.

But fiery Tudor near him rode,
 And instant close beside him strode,
 And whisper'd somewhat to his ear ;
 Which Henry, faltering, seem'd to hear,
 And slow and silently obey.
 Yet, though his stately seat he kept.

He bade the father lead the way ;
 And patient, as they stept, he stept,
 Listening to their slow chaunted lay,
 With due respect and bended head,
 While toward the Abbey-gate they led.

XIV.

On as that martial pageant drew.

The Knight on watch would point to view,
 Each banner and each chief he knew.
 " There rides the high Northumberland,
 Leading his hardy Northern band,
 The son of Hotspur, whose bold hand
 So oft the prize of victory won.
 There pass the Cliffords, sire and son ;
 And more of truly noble fire
 Ne'er glow'd than in the hoary sire !

There Stafford goes ; there Buckingham ;
And fiery Tudor, still the same.

Sir John de Grooby you may see,

With new-worn honours vain and brave ;
Just knighted by King Henry he,

O may he 'scape an early grave !

Whate'er his fate, he cares not now ;
The plume exults upon his brow."

XV.

Now Clement flies right speedily,

And, mounting on a turret-way,
Through narrow loop begins to spy,

The varying struggle of that day ;
F^h, figured underneath his eye,

While fearless he of spear and dart,

Lay street and road, as on a chart.

Close looked this Saxon turret down

Upon the four ways of the town,

And on Queen Ellen's shrine and green,

(The garden-plat alone between)

And, broad and straight, the way then spread

To old St. Peter's towered head ;

Closing the far perspective there,
His battlements were drawn on air.

XVI.

Below, the roads, and streets, and green,
So crowded were with shield and pike,
That scarcely was there room between
For lance to poise, or sword to strike ;
But the chief turmoil of the scene
Was on St. Peter's spacious way,
Where, in the centre of the green,
King Henry and his knights were seen,
Around his banner floating gay.
'Twas planted for the battle-hour,
With the full pomp of warlike power ;
'Mid clarion's and trumpet's sound,
And shouts, that rent the air far round,
Making old Alban's shrines to shake,
And tremble deep her crystal lake.
On Peter's street that standard stood,
Summoning hill and vale and wood.
While the King's orders went, to keep
The wards and barriers of the place

With strong watch ; for, near Alban's steep,
York now advanced, in quickened pace.

XVII.

Advanced so fast, that, when the King
One moment at the shrine would spend,
His chiefs arranged themselves in ring
Around, and urged him to suspend
His pious purpose, till that day
Were ended, and that battle-fray.
Meek Henry yielded with a sigh,

And something like a frown
Came darkening o'er his tearful eye ;
But soon, with patient look on high,
It died in smile of piety,

Such as blest saint might own.

Then, turned he to the humble door
Of Edmund Westby, th' Hundgedor ;
There his head-quarters were prepared
By those, who with him more than shared
His power ; there he resolved to wait
Whate'er might be the battle's fate,
Or welcome peace, or lengthened hate.

XVIII.

In terror from the turret-arch,
 Was now seen Richard's rapid march,
 And signal given and 'larum call,
 Rang round about the Abbey wall.
 Now all are up on gallery-tower,
 To scan the enemy's dread power
 O'er the wide fields advancing round
 From meadow-slopes, where woods had been,
 But now no sign of oak is seen ;
 Archers and pikemen step the ground ;
 And down the glade, that spreads below,
 Arrayed in many a gleaming row,
 They stand beneath St. Alban's brow.
 But chiefly on the eastern side
 Key's Field displayed their bannered pride.
 There most St. Alban's feared their blow ;
 St. Alban's—ill prepared for war,
 Though thronged with arms and warriors bold ;
 For no broad bulwark seen afar,
 Nor stretching rampart, proudly told
 Defiance and a mighty hold ;

But simple wall and barrier-gate
 Warded for old St. Alban's fate.

XIX.

Wide o'er the northern fields afar
 Still marched Duke Richard's lines of war,
 Whose white-rose banners, gathering nigh,
 Gave silent signal to the eye
 Of more than he had dared to claim—
 Richard of York's yet secret aim.

White blossoms in each cap were seen,

For unblown rose, the sweet may-thorn,
 From banks of freshly-blushing green

By gauntlet-fingers rudely torn,
 And placed on high, a smiling crest,
 O'er brows by iron vizor pressed ;

Device, at once, for the PALE ROSE,

And for the name that gave HIM sway,
 Who gaily on his warrior-brows

Bore the bright bloom PLANT-A-GENÈT

XX.

The warders scanned the outspread force

From tower and turret still in vain ;

Richard of York, in double course,
 To shrouding woods extends his train :
 And who may guess what numbers there
 In silence wait and watchful care,
 Ready the battle to sustain ?
 To inexperienced eyes, and fear,
 His hundreds, thousands thus appear,
 Now lost and seen in grove and field ;
 While Henry's thousands cooped in street,
 Seem but to threaten self-defeat,
 Incapable their strength to wield.

xxi.

Morning on day had far advanced,
 And not a spear in onset glanced ;
 But lingering messages were sent
 To Lancaster by York, the while,
 Who, trusting less in arms than guile,
 By aid of gold was still intent
 Some captains of his foe to gain ;
 His numbers might, he judged, be vain,
 Though the great Warwick ruled their course,
 To grapple Henry's loyal force.

XXII.

Unawed by sense of treachery,
Richard now dared, irreverently,
To call on Alban, as his saint,
To hear him vouch his true intent—
“ In verie knowledge of his trothe
To witness to his loyal oath,
To honour Henry as his king,
Should he to instant justice bring
Those false suggesters of his will,
Who wrought his kingdom only ill.”
Yet Henry's oath he would not take,
That speedy justice should awake ;
But, on the moment, made his claim
That every noble he might name
Should to his camp in fetters come,
And there receive their final doom:
This done, he would disperse his men.
And bow to Henry's power again.
But well he guessed such claim would wring
Only defiance from the King.

XXIII.

And this was Lancaster's reply,
 That rather than to him betray
 His faithful servants, he, this day,
 Would, for their sakes, fight—live or die !
 And, though long pressed by " great disease"
 And heaviness of heart,
 He swore by sainted Edward's peace,
 He would not thence depart
 Till every traitor of that hour,
 Who should persist in strife,
 If placed by battle in his power,
 Should forfeit there his life.
 This while the virtuous Henry said,
 A tear of anxious grief he shed.

XXIV.

The morn was gone, noon nearly come,
 Yet was not heard the 'larum-drum ;
 Still Richard held a double course,
 And Henry still restrained his force.
 Now, while full many a fearful eye
 From Alban's tower, look'd eagerly,

And none knew what delayed the blow,
 They marked again, in street below,
 A white-rose Herald blindfold led,
 Where high the bannered rose of red
 Waved duteous o'er the monarch's brow,
 King Henry, ever duly slow

To draw the desolating sword,
 Piteous and mindful of the woe,
 That might ensue from slighted word,
 Greeted the wily parl once more,
 And long the message pondered o'er ;
 For show of hope and peace it bore.

XXV.

And now a guileful sound of peace
 Swells faint to those, who watch on high,
 Bidding their care and terror cease.

But wherefore, to their straining eye,
 Yon shifting glance of helm and lance ?
 And why those sudden trumpet-sounds,
 Mingled with tremour of the drum,
 Gathering in loud and louder rounds,
 Like burst of gaunt and ravenous hounds ?

'Twas those without St. Alban's wall,
 Raising the treacherous onset-call,
 While yet for peace their Herald treats
 And "Peace!" is shouted through the streets.
 And now St. Alban's monks descry
 A shower of arrows falling nigh
 To Key's Field, o'er that barrier-lane,
 Where the besiegers strive in vain
 To burst into the guarded town ;
 While doubling and redoubling come
 The trumpet's shriek and roll of drum,
 And shouts that rage and havoc own.

XXVI.

In street below raged to'and fro,
 In wild disorder, men-at-arms ;
 And heralds sounding loud alarms ;
 And knights, close braced from head to toe,
 Uncertain where to meet the foe ;
 Whom, though they heard, they might not see
 For houses and for orchard-tree,
 Till signal from St. Alban's tower
 Pointed where pressed the threatening power.

Then Somerset, with brief command,
 In order ranged each 'wildered band.
 The noblest and the bravest stood
 By the East barrier, near the wood,
 That led to Sopewell's Priory,
 Where watched, in sad consistory,
 That fair and trembling sisterhood ;
 For thence the loudest turmoil came.
 But noble chiefs and knights of fame
 Crowded St. Peter's high broad way,
 Where their liege-lord, King Henry, lay.

XXVII.

And soon from other quarters blew
 Clarion and trump without the walls ;
 But even on tower they had scant view
 Of those whose 'larum thus appals.
 Those sounds called every foot to climb
 To battlement and tower sublime.
 Then not a brother stayed below,
 Whom age did not forbid to go ;
 Or who around the shrine kept ward ;

Or some sad priest, at Chantry-tomb,
 Saying long Obits in the gloom,
 Pale with expectance of his doom ;
 While, listening to dread sounds abroad,
 His station in the aisle denied
 To view the course of battle-tide :
 And oft the blast in turret nigh
 Mocked his impatience with it's sigh,
 As if some whispering friend drew near
 To share with him his half-told fear.

XXVIII.

Fiercer and fiercer rose the bray,
 Till, every shrine (save Alban's) left,
 The chantry of it's priest bereft,
 The silent dead forsaken lay.
 Even he, who, worn with last night's watch,
 Would fain some little slumber snatch,
 Now startled by the trumpet's breath,
 Calling as with the voice of death,
 Uprose and sought the turret grey,
 That eastward o'er the Chancel lay.
 The strength of battle press'd that way.

This little watch-nook hung in air

O'er the great window of the Shrine,
Forming a canopy most fair

For the carved cell and image fine,
That knelt with upward aspect there—
St. Clement, in his fretted cove,
The namesake of the Monk above.

This battled summit seemed his crown,
Who had for ages knelt thereon,
Seeming to feel with those below,
Whose choral voices, murmuring slow
Round those sad mansions of the dead,
Would strive a saintly peace to shed.

XXIX.

While Clement thus his fears obeyed,

And sought this barbican so high—

This raven's nest so near the sky—

More awful rose the battle cry ;

Steel clashed, and trump and clarion brayed.

It seemed as though the deafening sound

Rose straight below on Abbey-ground ;

But distant was the place of war,

Beyond the Eastern barrier,

And partial seen, by glimpse aloof,
 O'er many a high and crowded roof;
 For thwart the Abbey stretched the way
 Of Holywell, and screened the fray.
 Yet was Duke Richard's farther host
 In spreading shock of battle traced,
 By the near, unseen, impulse tossed,
 Like circles from a centre chaced.

XXX.

And o'er this swaying of the storm,
 Incessant hissed the viewless form
 Of arrows, shadowing the air,
 Or lightning glance of hurled spear;
 While keen, below, the restless rays
 Of shield and casque and corslet blaze;
 And Key's Field broad displayed the course
 Of Richard's and of Warwick's force.
 Neville of Salisbury fought near,
 Unseen, close at the barrier;
 But firm-set pike and arrowy shower
 Failed to make passage for his power;
 For aged Clifford stemmed his way,
 And scattering, as he went, dismay,

Fired young and aged, knight and lord,
And every hand that held a sword.

XXXI.

But whence the shouts so thrilling now ?
Why do the townsmen, on each roof,
Rise earnestly, even on the toe,
And rashly hurry to and fro,
As if on level ground they'go,
And mount the chimney-tops aloof,
And bend far o'er the depth below ?
Those ridgy roofs and chimneys tall,
Crowded with heads, like leaves on tree,
From Clement's anxious gaze hid all
He climbed this lofty perch to see.
But soon the arrows fell so near,
The gazers shrunk below with fear,
And left each summit-station clear ;
He then, in safe and shrouded nook,
Upon the place of war could look.

XXXII.

There yet a narrow Green is shown,
That eastward runs behind the town—

The place where Richard pitched his tent ;
 Small part of the broad space, that went,
 By name of Key's Field ; close it bent
 To Sopewell lanes. The barrier nigh
 Did long the enemy defy.

The princely Somerset fought here ;
 And, had his spirit e'er known fear,
 That fear it would not now have owned,
 For here no fateful castle frowned ;
 And well he knew the prophecy,
 " That under castle he must die."

While the stress lay round that barrier,
 (Clifford within and York without)
 So often swerved th' assailing rout,
 That Richard's overthrow seemed near ;
 But who 'gainst secret aid is sure ?
 What force 'gainst treachery may endure ?

XXXIII.

O'er beds of peaceful flowers he came,
 The Knight who flew to Richard's need.
 With helm and shield on barbed steed ;
 Onward he pressed, at utmost speed,

Glared on his lance the red war-flame,

Knights and spearmen fast succeed.

On full six hundred helms appeared—

His badge in gold or silver wrought—

A rampant bear, with staff uprear'd,

And this the boastful tale it told—

“ He wins whom I uphold !”

Fierce was the trumpet blast—the war-cry burst ;

“ A Warwick ! a Warwick ! Warwick is here !”

In Holywell road he was the first

Where valiant De Clifford kept barrier.

Though grey his locks in his cap of steel,

Yet a hero's fire glowed in his eye ;

His spirit glowed for his country's weal ;

“ In Henry's cause may I live or die !”

XXXIV.

“ My Lord De Clifford, Warwick's foe !

Warwick calls on you now to show,

Why meet'st thou not the RAGGED STAFF ?

The Bear would fain thy life-blood quaff.

Hast thou forgot thy daring taunt,

That thou through life my steps would'st haunt ?

My Lord De Clifford ! here am I,
 Avouch thy boast, or it deny !"
 Soon as his voice De Clifford heard,
 No halt made he for taunting word,
 But cheered the knights of his command,
 And rushed to meet him hand to hand.
 Strong as Disdain his well-nerved arm,
 Loyal his heart, all true and warm,
 He sprang to meet his mighty foe ;
 " Who vainly boasts let this day show !
 Where was his son at this dread hour,
 When Rage and Hatred o'er him lour ?
 He fights not in his father's band ;
 Afar he holds some high command.
 But numbers round De Clifford fought,
 Who Danger's vanmost heroes sought :
 Whom zeal and reverence and pride
 Held close embattled at his side.

xxxv.

When Clement from his post looked down
 Close on this quarter of the town,
 And viewed the fateful turmoil there,
 Scarce could his mounting spirit bear

To loiter here, secure and free,
 While cries for doubtful victory
 Pierced to the very vault of air ;
 But monks below, on battlement,
 Who watched how the fierce contest went,
 Of these, scarce one but blessed the day
 When he to Abbey took his way,
 And bound himself to shun all battle-fray.

XXXVI.

Hark ! Warwick hath burst the barrier,
 And in the surge of combat there,
 Which rolled not on, but to and fro,
 Alternate swayed for friend and foe.
 Each individual form was lost,
 So mingled was that mighty host.
 No eye might now De Clifford trace,
 Nor eager Warwick's lofty grace ;
 Yet knew where each the conflict held
 By fall of horse and crash of shield.
 And oh ! what mingled sounds arose
 Above the trumpet's fiercest call !
 The yell of havock—shrieking woes
 Of matrons, from the latticed wall.

Watching unseen in houses nigh,
 Who view a son, or husband fall,
 And under trampling charger lie,
 In deep, expiring agony !

XXXVII

Now arrows thickening in the air,
 With hiss incessant, shrill, and near,
 Warned from each open battlement
 The crowding monks that o'er it bent
 But Clement, in his turret-cell,
 From evil hap was sheltered well ;
 Yet wounded was his sight by flow
 Of human blood in streams below.
 Not so the raven's o'er his head,
 As mute he watched the slaughtered,
 Unseen companion ! stern and sly,
 Waiting his banquet of the dead,
 Impatient while the dying die !

XXXVIII.

And now, behold the barrier-guard
 Pressed back into the rising street,
 Where houses hide their slow retreat
 From Clement's view, though hitherward

The rage of war came nearer still ;
 For, on this steeply-mounting hill
 The Abbey stood, part screened below
 By wall and gate and orchard-bough.
 And, while afar bold Warwick's force
 Beyond the barrier he could watch,
 Yet might our Clement sparely catch
 Glimpse of the nearer battle's course.
 At times o'er wall, or waving branch,
 Appeared high plume on helmed brow,
 Or iron hand upraised to launch
 The battle axe, or sabre blow ;
 The threatened blow he well might see,
 But not it's fateful certainty ;
 A falling horseman he might spy,
 Or a freed charger passing by,
 Or warrior bleeding on the ground,
 Even just without the Abbey's round.

XXXIX.

The battle's strength still slowly pressed
 Up Holywell, on Warwick's side,
 When Clement from his secret nest
 Heard 'larums new and shoutings, wide ;

And looking northward, whence ~~their~~ course,
 He marked a troop of Henry's horse
 Led on by Percy's self, at speed :
 They came at Clifford's utmost need,
 With fierce and threatening cries afar,
 And checked awhile the tide of war.
 'Twas Percy of Northumberland,
 Rode vanmost of the gallant band :
 And Buckingham and Stafford's earl
 Led where the crimson flags unfurl ;
 And many a knight and baron bold,
 In battle and in honours old,
 And many a youth, who but that morn
 Had first his knightly emblems worn.

XI.

To Clement it was dreadful sight,
 This press of noble chief and knight ;
 For now more deadly raged the fight.
 And here the place of war outspread,
 Showed him their armour streaming red,
 And almost every wound, that bled,
 And down the charger's panting side
 He marked the gushing slaughter-tide !

In vain the ~~shaff~~ guards his face,
 Or neck the mailed mainfaire shields,
 Or breast-plate fills it's ample space ;
 Such garniture poor shelter yields.

XLI.

King Henry's bravest warriors move,
 Great Warwick's hardiness to prove,
 While, closely urged by foeman's spear,
 The wounded coursers plunge and rear,
 With outspread nostrils raised in air,
 And fiery eyes, that shoot despair ;
 They trample back the crowd behind,
 Who, upward on the steep hill forced,
 Press other troops in street confined ;
 Then chargers fall, and men unhorsed
 O'er their own dead and dying go,
 Nor horror, nor even pity know,
 Conscious of nought but hate and strife,
 Reckless of quickly-ebbing life,
 Fighting on foot 'gainst horse and lance,
 Meeting in vain their foe's advance ;
 Till, on the heaped and nameless dead,
 They reach their final gory bed.

XLII.

Now other trumpets, blown with might,
 North, East, and West, spoke triple fight ;
 But loudest strains swelled from the way
 Where their liege-lord, King Henry, lay.
 There York himself the barrier burst,
 And on St. Peter's Green was first.
 And now, on summit of the town,
 Where stood Queen Ellen's shrine alone,
 King Henry's troops make their firm stand
 As if each man thought his sole hand
 Fought on that spot for the whole land.
 And from that summit of the town,
 On the four main-ways looking down,
 At every bar, save one, they see
 The archers of the enemy ;
 And crowding helms, and ill-spurred horse,
 Trampling o'er the new-fallen corse,
 And forcing back each barrier-guard,
 Mount where that Shrine had long kept solemn ward.

XLIII.

That Shrine, where Silence wont to dwell,
 And listen to the breathing spell

Of midnight hymn ; or the lone psalm
 Of monk thus wooing the soul's calm
 Or the long sweep of winter's wind,
 Like sigh of disembodied mind ;
 Or winter wind, or summer shower
 Falling on leaves of Abbey-bower :—
 That shrine of Edward's lasting love,
 Where reverend steps alone might move,
 Which every eye with tears survey'd,
 While every head it's homage paid,
 Where tenderest thoughts still hovered round,
 And gentle visions blessed the ground,
 Wearing Queen Ellen's mien and smile again,
 Who sucked the venom from her husband's vein.

XLIV.

Upon the steep of Holywell,
 The strife of death had ceased to swell ;
 'Twas filled with slayer and with slain,
 And there alone did Warwick reign :
 Yet slowly mount his conquering train
 For hardly may they make their way,
 So heaped the bleeding bodies lay.

Even the war-horse, when near the dead,
 Trembles before the life-stream red ;
 Bristles his horror-lifted mane ;
 His tossing nostrils speak his pain.

Still, with distorted side-long leer,
 He views the object of his fear :
 At last his shuddering feet uprear,
 At last the spur assails in vain.
 The warrior on his back feels less.

Though better might that warrior know
 The signs of suffering and woe,
 And his own doubtful fortune guess.
 But poor ambition, thoughtless pride.
 Bear him, scarce moved, through battle's tide.

XLV.

Then Clement left his raven-nest,
 And to a Saxon turret pressed
 That o'er the northern transept rose,
 Where all around Queen Ellen's bier
 He wide might view, and all might hear,
 Even till the battle's close.

As he approached that turret-stair,
 Lone were the Shrines and Chantries near ;

No shadowed form on **Ó**ffa's aisle
 Stole o'er the drear length of the pile,
 But all so hushed the scene beneath,
 It seemed the hall and throne of Death.

XLVI.

Clement had gained the turret-floor,
 And pressed the massy oaken door :
 Surprised he found himself among
 The Abbot and a younger throng
 Of monks, whose sight could pierce afar,
 And tell the varying tide of war.
 From their full window he withdrew,

 And to the sister-turret hied,
 That looked on the same northern view.

 Commanding o'er it far and wide :
 Here—though a crowd of hooded heads
 Darkened the double Saxon arch,
 Fled from high tower and open leads,—

 Here might he watch the battle's march.

XLVII.

From blessed Peter's tower on high
 To Ellen's shrine of sanctity,

No thwarting roof-tops then concealed
 The broad way of that fateful field.
 The long green vista stretched below,
 Straight as an arrow from a bow.
 There, close around that ancient tower,
 Incessant fell the arrowy shower ;
 O'er graves and charnel vaults it flew.
 It cleared the streets in Clement's view.
 Duke Richard's self, commanding there,*
 Had forced the northern barrier ;
 Waged war o'er the long-buried dead
 And blood upon their homes had shed.
 And many a youthful warrior brave,
 In his first armour dressed,
 Fought even upon his very grave,
 His morrow's final rest.

XLVIII.

From that ~~dark~~ tower the long broad way
 Was thronged with Henry's bands,
 Close pressing where their monarch lay,
 And where his banner, floating gay.
 Richard's full force withstands.

Clement could not De Clifford see,
 Nor Somerset's high blazonry ;
 But Buckingham's pale plume he knew,
 And his white armour's silvery hue ;
 And, while he gazed, he saw him bow,
 Then rise and totter in his seat,
 And rein his charger to retreat.
 A shaft has pierced his iron brow ;
 He sinks to earth ; the dark streams flow.

XLIX.

Stafford, his noble son, fought near,
 But saw not when his father fell ;
 And soon the battle's onward swell
 Checked, though not turned, his own career.
 For, vain the terrors of his spear,
 A fatal dart his gauntlet caught ;
 'Twas pain, not danger, as he thought,
 And, heedless of that pain, he fought
 Till, fainting with the bleeding wound,
 He falls on henchmen pressing round,
 Who bear him senseless from the ground.

L.

But, yonder, on St. Peter's way,
 * With long sweep and resistless sway,
 The surge of battle rolls along,
 And threatens even the household throng.
 Who watch their King, this fateful day.
 And now, behold his banner there
 Bow low and totter in the air ;
 And now, from forth his guarded hall,
 St. Alban's lofty Sefeschal,
 And Henry's self, appear.
 Yet feebly did the King advance.
 As bending to some dire mischance,
 His vizor close, his sword in hand,
 And guarded by a noble band
 And crowds of demi-tance.

LI.

He mounted on his battle-horse,
 But turned him from the battle's course,
 Or would have turned ; the warrior steel
 Showed daring high for other deed.
 Long did his stubborn neck disdain
 To bend him from the trumpet's strain.

With prancing foot and curvet high,
With spurning heel and arching mane,
He baffled still the guiding rein.
He would have borne his lord away,
And plunged him in the thickest fray,
But that a friend, though loth to yield,
With strong arm bore him from the field.

LII.

Yet hardly through the gory street,
So thick the dead and dying lay,
Could the guard find a safe retreat
For Henry, or pass on their way.
Then Lancaster's sad heart sunk low,
Ill could he brook such sight of woe ;
Shuddering he turned aside his head,
While his steed stepped among the dead ;
But still to his averted eyes
Other grim shapes of horror rise,
And " Peace, O! blessed Peace," he cried ;
While knights, who varded at his side,
Could scarce restrain their rising pride.

And when their lord secure might lie,
Swore round his Rose to live, or die

LIII.

And had our sovereign lady, Dame
Margaret, the Queen, been here,
Her cheek had crimsoned o'er with shame
To view her husband's fear ;
Though sorrow and disease oppressed
The princely spirit in his breast.
Not thus she fled, when second war
Dyed Alban's field with blood,
But high on Victory's iron car,
Rushed through the purple flood.
But pity tempered not her ire ;
No tear-drop dewed her eye of fire ;
No hallowed fear her conscience held,
Nor piety her proud heart quelled ;
These virtues, that ambition thwart,
Drew not upon her course the rein ;
Brought not the pause—the second thought,
That passion's impulse may restrain :
Rapid and fierce she pressed her way,
Though Truth and Mercy bleeding lay

So, Gloucester, thy red grave might tell,
When mourned for thee St. Alban's knell.

LIV.

Danger, when braved, like coward flies,
And safety, sought, oft wayward hies ;
And this King Henry's heart was taught,
Even while he humble shelter sought.
For, ere he reached a cottage-wall,
An arrow-wound had made him fall,
But that his band close round him throng,
And bear him on his steed along ;
And, wounded, bleeding, fainting, slow,
A thatched roof shrouds a Monarch's woe.

LV.

Return we now to Ellen's shrine,
Where, thronging through the four street-ways,
Ensigns and plumes still wave and shine,
And falchions flash and helmets blaze,
And flights of arrows dim the air,
Rattling like hail,
On shield and mail,
In chorus with the war-shouts there.

And still, where blessed Peter's tower
 O'erlooked Plantagenet's chief power,
 Still, in Sir Philip Wentworth's care,
 Proudly the Royal Banner stood.

But now, while onward swept the flood,
 That standard trembled in the air,
 And foremost fled the traitor-knight,
 Sworn to maintain that banner's right.

He fled, without a single wound,

He fled, and cast it on the ground !

Then, scarce opposed, York's special guard

Made dreadful havock down the street ;

And, though below their way was barred,

'Twas there their whole force thronged to meet.

VI.

Long did the noblest of the land

Round Ellen's mournful bier withstand

The triple-guided force

Of Warwick, York, and Salisbury ;

Oh ! it was dreadful truth to see

The battle press it's course

Up every way to that high place,
 Where, crushed into a narrow space,
 The band of heroes fought
 For him, who meekly wore the crown
 From sire and grandsire given down,
 By his own will unsought.
 It was a gallant, mournful sight .
 To see those warriors few
 Die for the cause which they thought right.
 —Allegiance they thought due.

LVII.

And now the rumour faintly spread,
 That Henry wounded was, and fled ;
 Nay, lay in humble cottage dead.
 Then first his faithful knights knew dread.
 But, transient was such sense of woe,
 And, " Vengeance ! Victory !" they cried ;
 " His son shall triumph, though he died."
 Richard of York, the while, had sought
 Where the King wounded lay,
 And soon to his low roof was brought,
 And claimed the prize of that fierce day.

Henry, though captive, then might see
 His conqueror on bending knee,
 With feigned suit and bold pretence,
 Protesting truth and reverence.
 In wily words, with poor deceit.

York said he never meant him ill :
 That he had only armed to meet

Those foes, whose dark, ambitious will
 Had ruled his councils and the realm,
 And shortly would his throne o'erwhelm,
 But now, those enemies o'erthrown,
 If Henry would their acts disown,
 And rule the English land alone,
 His true liege-subject he would prove,
 And henceforth only seek his love.

LVIII.

And thus swore all York's subtle band ;
 But, adding still a new demand,
 They claimed to guard the King from foes,
 Lest evil council should dispose
 His virtuous will to vengeful deed
 And, by retaliation, lead

To future discontent and woe.

Now, this urged Richard's subtle train ;

And further " safety to maintain,"

They asked he on the morn would go

To London, in their duteous care,

And choose with them a council fair.

LIX.

And thus, with humble look and word

The Duke his loftier hope deferred.

Though Victory was on his side.

He secretly might own,

Time had not brought on the spring-tide

Might bear him to the throne.

To win this venturous battle-day

Such arts had now been tried

As could not claim continued sway.

Nor long his fortune guide.

But, for the moment gratified,

He left to future hour his claim,

That surer he might work his aim ;

And therefore did he lowly bow,

Though victor, to his captive now.

LX.

Soon did fair speech King Henry gain,
 While his heart, filled with grief
 For others' jeopardy and pain,
 In words now sought relief.
 " Spare, spare my people's blood," he said,
 " This moment bid the slaughter rest,
 My will shall then by yours be led ;
 My pardon take for all the past.
 Lead me within the Abbey walls ;
 This scene of blood my heart appals !"

LXI.

Straight, Warwick bade the carnage cease,
 And bleeding strife was hushed in peace.
 That fateful moment who may paint !
 Meet instant for the joy of saint,
 The sword upraised withheld the blow,
 That might have laid a brother low.
 Then, sire and son, in armour clasped,
 While almost each the other grasped,
 And strove against the other's life,
 Heard the low strain, that stills the strife.

DAY OF THE FIRST BATTLE.

They pause ; the steeled mask they raise ;
They gaze ; they shudder, and they praise !
The song of Peace is on the air,
Her snowy signal floating there '
One moment stopped the woe prepared,
And death, remorse, and horror spared.
Oh ! may that saintly moment be
Enshrined in high eternity ;
And there to blessed Henry give
Such joy of Peace as he bade live !

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

CANTO IV.

THE HOUR AFTER THE BATTLE.

Now to St. Alban's shrine was led
The captive King with royal guard ;
While Richard at his side kept ward,
And Men-at-arms, with stately tread,
Encompassing about him went,
Beneath the Abbey's battlement.
But, who King Henry's woes may tell,
As he passed on the blood-stained way,
Where half his gallant nobles fell,
And yet untouched, uncovered lay,
Scarce cold, upon the gory heap,
Fixed in their last, unbreathing sleep !—
The friends, who on this very morn,
Since when but few brief hours had sped.

Had high sway in his council borne ;
 Who bent with him the thoughtful head !
 Whose living eye by his was read !—
 Now, ever closed their earthly dream ;
 All vanished, like a phantom's gleam ;
 The veil withdrawn—the vision fled !

II.

The Abbot at the Abbey-gate
 The victor and the vanquished met ;
 And thence, with bands in formal march,
 And monks arranged in order long,
 Led to the farthest eastern arch,
 With mourning chant from the full throng ;
 Where Henry, on St. Alban's tomb,
 Sought to disperse his mental gloom.

III.

Such Vision still is seen to mourn,
 When evening-twilight falls—
 By him, who on that day's return
 Stands silent by these walls—
 The vanquished Sire, the victor Chief,
 The mitred Abbot pale in years,

Whose cheek seems furrowed o'er by grief,
 And sanctified by Pity's tears,
 The pious fathers, side by side,
 And the whole Convent's choral pride ;
 Three times beneath the Chancel's gloom,
 They move around St. Alban's tomb,
 Through open arches that appear,
 As once they went above the biers ;
 But, when the dream has passed away,
 Close, and are seen as at this day.

IV.

It is a strange and fearful sight—
 The Vision of that dreary night !
 —To watch those shadows crowding by,
 Each moving in his ordered place,
 Like living form, with deathly face,
 Distinct, and busy to the eye,
 With gesture true of solemn rite ;
 Yet not a whisper heard, the while,
 Of step, or voice, upon the aisle ;
 —It is a strange and fearful sight !

V.

But other scene, on that midnight,
 Has shook the sexton with affright,
 While passing o'er the glimmering nave,
 By the dim flame his lanthorn gave.
 Sudden, on each low tomb around,
 A bleeding bier has seemed to rest,
 Where stern in death a warrior frowned,
 With funeral watch-light o'er his crest.
 Where'er the old man turned his view,
 Has seemed such face of livid hue.
 But feeble age has fancies strange !
 Youth may, on that same midnight, range
 Through choir and aisle, and nothing see,
 Save Norman arch and gallery,
 And the brass-bounden grave of him,
 Who sang the warrior's dying hymn.
 But, leave we now such idle dream,
 To mind the past, yet real theme.

VI.

Low at St. Alban's tomb they knelt,
 The Conqueror and his King,

The Monarch hushed the pang he felt ;
 Nor did the victor sing
 Memorial for the battle won,
 But, decent, mourned the slaughter done.
 Then solemn, from the Choir below,
 The hymn of Vespers rose,
 And, while meek Henry's tears fast flow,
 Breathed balm upon his woes ;
 But, transient was the sad repose :—
 It ended with the Vespers' close !

VII.

Just where the King did lowly bend,
 Lay Gloucester in his grave !
 His truest counsellor and friend,
 Whom yet he failed to save
 From Margaret's hate and Beaufort's guile,
 All unsuspecting he, the while,
 Of the fell hatred that they bare
 His kinsman—and their murderous snare.
 And of his own progressive fate.
 Had good Duke Humphrey ruled the state,
 His truth had been his Sovereign's shield
 Gainst treason, open, or concealed.

Good Gloucester slept within this space.
 And Henry, sufferer in his place,
 Stood o'er his grave, in sanctuary
 From his own rebel soldiery !
 Oh ! who may dare unfold
 The darkening thoughts that o'er his spirit rolled,
 And from his memory threatened, soon to sweep
 All paler records of long years, that weep,
 While, thus a captive, with his foe he bent
 Silent o'er bleeding Gloucester's monument.

VIII.

When service in the Choir was o'er,
 The Monarch and his train
 Passed onward to the cloister-door,
 Led by the Abbot, as before,
 With the full chaunted strain,
 To rest in royal chambers nigh,
 The honoured Abbot's guarded guest,
 Beneath the velvet canopy,
 Whose couch he oft in peace had pressed.
 How different is his present state
 From that he once had known,

When Westminster proclaimed his fate
Was France and England's throne ;
When, passing from the tapers' glare,
Just cumbered with his crown of care,
With infant smile he laughed to see
Such crowds and blaze of pageantry !

IX.

Ah ! had he dimly then perceived
The secret of the gift received,
Stained with the blood of former times
And thickly set with deadly crimes,
Gleaming with woes and passions dire
From 'mid Ambition's smouldering fire
How had he shrunk, and wished to lie
" In shades of quiet privacy !
And, ere he wore it for his own,
Renounced at once his father's crown.
Now, all its terrors blazed, confest,
And peace for ever left his breast.
Yet might he not his path retread,
And give from his anointed head
The diadem his fathers gave,
Which fixed him for a party's slave.

X.

Hard was the heart, and stern the mind,
 And to it's own contentment blind,
 That could unloose a kingdom's woes,
 Within that painful crown confined,
 While firm it circled Henry's brows ;
 That could a selfish, slumbering right
 Rouse from it's lair in Time's dim night ;
 Cry " Havock !" and pursue the prey
 But for Ambition's holiday !
 Hard was the heart, and dark the mind !
 Such his, who Henry's path beside
 Marched where the convent-train inclined,
 Beneath the Transept's vaulted pride.

XI.

And thus was ranged the stately march,
 When the King passed the Transept-arch :—
 On his right-hand the Abbot walked,
 Mitred and in his cope of gold,
 The pious monarch's gift of old ;
 And on his left Duke Richard stalked.
 Straight from the place of war came he,
 Nor moment spared his casque to free ;

Aloft the white plume proudly rose,
 But soiled with crimson were it's snows,
 And Henry paid a bitter tear
 For every gore-drop speaking there.
 Beneath, the lion-passant crest
 His royal lineage professed ;
 And vizor up might darkly show
 The meaning of his anxious brow ;
 While Richard's form and stately grace,
 His stature high, and martial pace,
 Decisive look, and eye of fire,
 Steady, though keen, and quick and dire,
 Gave contrast to King Henry's air,
 Who, wan from wounds, from grief and care,
 Moved with unequal step and slow,
 With wearied countenance of woe,
 And weeping, with uplifted eye
 Of meekness and of piety.

XII.

The reverend father, by his side,
 Though pale and bowed with care and age,
 Still showed an aspect dignified,

A look of mildly-tempered pride,
 Such as doth love and awe engage.
 As some tall arch, in fretted state,
 Left lonely 'mid the wrecks of fate,
 Though perished be each gorgeous stain
 That coloured high the storied pane ;
 Though broken be the moulded line,
 That flowed with grandeur of design ;
 Though shades of many a hoary year
 With lights of silver grey are there ;
 Th' awakened mind YET MORE supplies
 Than Time has stolen from our eyes ;
 And o'er the ruin's desert space,
 That arch, throws high and shadowy grace.
 Wraps us in pleasures almost holy
 Of reverence, love and melancholy.

XIII.

Through the great cloister passed the train,
 Where the carved trefoil windows glowed
 With many a rich illumined pane,
 By living Whorhamstede bestowed.
 Large was the verdant plain within,
 High the arched walks encompassing.

Now darkened was that long-stretched way
 With Alban's hundred monks; though gay
 In scarlet copes went Chancellor,
 The noble Steward, Seneschal,
 And officers in the rich pall
 They wore on solemn festival;
 In snowy state, each Chorister,
 Chaunting before the mournful King,
 Till he had reached that guarded door,
 Where, tall and light, the arches soar
 That lift the Chapter's vaulted ring.

XIV.

Then part the King and priestly band,
 Who, in long line, on either hand
 Bend lowly, as he moves along,
 Smiling upon the cowed throng,
 To the last murmur of their song.
 Still marched Duke Richard at his side,
 And still the Abbot was his guide.
 A different train received the guest,
 Soon as he moved from his short rest:
 Soldiers, with helm and pike arrayed,
 Lined the long walk of cloister-shade,

That lay between the abbey aisle
 And royal lodge, a stately pile.
 A royal homage still they paid
 In the meek hymn the trumpets played.
 How felt the King, when close he viewed
 Hands drenched with his good people's blood,
 And looks that said they held in ward,
 And still would hold, their sovereign lord !

xv.

In the KING'S PARLOUR waited now
 Poor banquet, served in saddest mood,
 Where pages round their monarch bow,
 And captive knights indignant stood,
 To view their injured King bestow
 His speech upon his subtle foe,
 Who wrought this day of blood and woe.
 With starting tear of gratitude
 And pity, good King Henry viewed
 His faithful servants near him stand,
 And here attend—a prisoner-band.
 Not Richard's truth, nor courtesy,
 Had placed them here, but policy.

And Henry, though not thus deceived,
 Such art instead of truth received.
 Fill not for him the wassail-bowl,
 Strike not the minstrel-string ;
 These may not o'er his saddened soul
 Their brief delirium fling :
 For he has passed among the dead,
 And Truth's great lesson there has read,
 As from each face the mask she drew,
 And showed what phantoms we pursue !
 While his wandering troubled eye,
 Life's swift progress seemed one sigh !

XVI.

But short repose the banquet gave,
 Ere Warwick and Earl Salisbury crave
 Audience of him they still call King ;
 And many a wily guest they bring.
 Straight from the field they came in haste,
 Informed on all points to the last.
 Now to the Council-room repaired,
 With harassed mind, their wounded Lord,
 To sign his pardons, and reward
 The traitors, who his life yet spared.

The Abbot to his chamber drew
 (His heart to Henry ever true)
 To gain a quiet pause, though sad,—
 Perchance an unseen tear to shed,
 And lift his thoughts where oft they fled.

XVII.

Then order to the Steward went,
 That hospitable cheer
 Should to the Abbey gates be sent
 Of bread and meat and beer ;
 And to each soldier, friend or foe,
 Dole from buttery-hatch should go ;
 But other store of food was small ;
 For thousands thronged in Riban's wall,
 And every townsman's board was spread
 For victor, or for conquered.
 Now, at each postern and low gate,
 The Monks dispense to all, that wait,
 What fare they may : but, who can show
 The groups that, gathering below,
 Now stood beneath the reverend tower,
 Emblems of battle's bleeding hour ?

Wain were their features, fierce, though faint
 From toil and hunger and dismay,
 Just 'scaped with life the deadly fray ;
 Their o'erstrained muscles quivered still ;
 Their eager eyes, suspecting ill,
 Weré watchful yet of all around,
 Even on this consecrated ground.
 The broken armour's crimson sheen
 Showed what the owner's lot had been ;
 There grimly did the cap of steel
 Dint of strong battle-axe reveal,
 Or cuirass, bearing sign of spear,
 Proved Death had threatened entrance here.
 All were so changed with dust and gore,
 Their nearest friends had passed them o'er ;
 And their strange, rude and broken tone,
 Not wife, nor courted lass had known.

XVII.

While thus beneath St. Alban's shade,
 Panting, these bands of Havock stayed.
 Round crowded porch and postern nigh,

Some outstretched on the graves are laid,
 On lower wall some rest the head,
 They ne'er again may hold on high.
 And some within the sacred aisle
 Lean on an altar-tomb the while,
 And, flinging down the bleeding sword,
 Instead of offering humbled word,
 Greet with an oath the watch-monk there.
 Whose low-breathed hymn and pious care,
 With kindest awe and gratitude,
 In all but basest hearts ill passion had subdued:

XIX.

Some, too, there were, whose evil eye
 Scowled on the Monks, as they supply,
 With kindness meek, due sustenance,
 Sweet'ning the bounty they dispense.
 " Well may they give of ample store,
 Wrung from the land and famished poor,
 To bribe us to forbearance now
 From plunder of their shrines, I trow!
 Methinks our swords have something won

From lazy Monks, who live i' th' sun
And roll in riches of the land ;
While others, by hard toil of hand,
May scantily live from day to day.
Yet, listening to their cunning saye,
Henry and Richard bid us ' Nay.'
Let such folks in a convent stay ;
But, by St. Alban's crown of gold,
I would not—I—for them withhold
From treasures now within our reach,
Though Kings command and Abbots preach.
Then, rousing from his sullen mood,
Such soldier snatched his comrade's food ;
And so displayed to humblest sense
The motive of his fair pretence.

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

CANTO V.

THE EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.

SCENE—WITHOUT THE WALLS OF ST. ALBAN'S.

IN angry gloom the sun went down
Upon St. Alban's bleeding town,
While sadly many a Red-rose knight,
Escaping from the ruthless fight,
Traversed the woods and wild hills round ;
And ever sought he tangled ground,
Pathless and dim and far away
From peasant-foe, who might convey
Notice to Richard's scouts and bands,
Prowling for prey o'er Alban's lands.

II.

Oft would the lonely Warrior start
At glance of arms, shot through the shade,
Where bright the western sun-beam played,
Judging some foeman watched apart ;

And strange it was, 'mid brake and bush,

Where only might he guess to see
Sweet violets sleeping to the hush

Of southern breeze, 'neath oaken tree,—
Strange there to spy a warrior's casque,
Or cuirass gleam, or steely mask ;
An eyeless horror, stern and still,
Amid the peace of leaf and rill.

It was but harness, thronyn aside,

Whose cumbrous weight had stayed the flight
Of some sad comrade of the fight,
In the late scene of evil-tide.

These armour-signs, if spelt aright,
Might tell whose footsteps he might trace
Along the rude and desert place.

III.

Oft would he pause on woody hill,
Listening if all were lone and still.
And oh ! how still it seemed and lone

To one escaped from battle-bray,
From raging and from dying moan
To Nature's grand and peaceful way !

How calm her breathings, pure and clear,
Among the linden foliage here !

How fresh and gay it's blossomed spray ;
How sweet and good her smiles appear !
Sublime her ordered laws and true
Moved o'er the landscape's evening-hue,
And solemn in the thunder spoke,
That, far off, on the hill-tops broke.
Sublime her stormy lights and shade,
Which all the stretching view pervade.
Her storms no moral evil show,
To work—like human tempest—woe ;
But health and goodness from them flow,
Quickly and sure as tears of Spring
The Summer's fruit and beauty bring.

IV.

The Red-rose Knight, who from the hill
Yet watched where wood and vale were still,
Had 'scaped, though wounded, from the strife,
And hardly 'scaped with limb and life.
He fought, until King Henry's host,
By treachery foul, not weakness, lost,

Were pressed, at all points, on the town,
Deceived, betrayed, and trampled down.

This loyal Knight of Lancaster,

Though not in Alban's prison bound,
Was not yet free from anxious fear

For friends, who fought upon that ground

And yet he lingered on the hill

With parting look, and listened still,

As if his eye, or ear, might glean

Tidings of that now distant scene.

v.

He heard, perchance, faint trumpet-strain
Marshal for watch some knightly train ;
Or neigh of charger, high and shrill,
And sounds perplexed and dubious thrill ;
Or 'larum-drum and shout afar,
The dying tremour of the war ;
Or, deep and full, St. Alban's bell
Roll on the breeze the warrior's knell.
And he would gaze, with sad farewell,
Where yet the gliding splendour falls,
Along those ancient towers and walls.

VI.

Throned in the vale and pomp of wood,
The Norman Abley darkly stood,
And frowned upon that place of blood,
Beneath the lowering western cloud ;
Till the sun, from stormy shroud,
Looked out, in fierce, yet sullen ire,
And touched the towering pile with fire.
Below, each battled turret seemed
The Martyr's crown of flame to wear ;
While, through the airy arches there,
The sun's red splendour streamed.
But transept-roofs and aisles between
Lay stretched in darker tint and mien.
As if they mourned the slaughtered dead,
Laid out in blood, beneath their shade.
Slowly the vision changed its hue,
In sullen mists the sun withdrew,
A ball of lurid fire, from view.
Yet curving lines of burnished gold,
(Traced where light clouds their edges fold)
Through the red haze, his station told.

Then Evening fell o'er all the vale,
 Faded each tower and turret pale ;
 Till, shapeless, huge, obscure as doom,
 The Abbey stood in steadfast gloom ;
 Vast, indistinct, and lone,
 Like Being from a world unknown !

VII.

While the worn Warrior gazed his last.
 The death-bell spoke upon the blast.
 And now, while he beheld afar—
 Himself secure—that place of war,
 And heard again that deep death-bell
 Along the evening breezes swell,
 Each moment waked a tenderer fear,
 Each toll made one dear friend more dear.
 He marvelled how he could have fled.
 Uncertain of their fate ;
 And back resolved his steps to tread,
 And seek to know their state.
 Then, through the gloom he bent his way.
 Led by the Abbey's solemn lay.
 High music on the soul it played
 Of thoughts beyond this earth's low shade.

VIII.

Though on St. Alban's tower and town
The shadows of the tempest frown,
In softened shade, along the vale,
Peace seemed to dwell in twilight pale.
O'er the long, fading forest line,
Village and hamlet, hid beneath,
Sent up on high their silent sign
Of evening cheer, the thin grey wreath :
Village and hamlet, that by day
Veiled in the sleeping shadows lay,
Or, in blue distance, gave faint show
Of roofs and social scenes below.
Ah ! treacherous to their own repose !
Such wreath betrays to watchful foes,
Scowring the hills and heath-land nigh,
Where dear, though humble, treasures lie.
And the bright-blazing hearth may share,
Though not the crimes, the woes, of war.
To other eyes such blaze might speak
Of succour, that they vainly seek,
For bleeding wound, for ebbing life.
For fainting nature's last, last strife.

Vain hope, it fades upon his sight ;
 The Warrior's eyes are dim in night !
 No arm his sinking head may prop,
 No light hand dry the chilly drop ;
 The damps of death are on his brow,
 Oh ! for some aid—some comfort now !
 That now is passed, he breathes no more
 Unseen—unheard—his pangs are o'er !

IX.

Where were his friends when he sunk low
 Knew they no strange presaging woe ?
 Felt they no instinct of that hour,
 No touch of sympathy's deep power,
 Run o'er the shuddering nerves, and wake
 Tones from the heart, that anguish spake ?
 Like to that lyre's prophetic call,
 Self-sounding from the lonely wall,
 Whose only utterance was a sigh,
 To hint when death, or woe, was nigh.
 Ah, no ! they talked, or laughed, or sang,
 Unconscious of his dying pang.
 No eye wept o'er his lowly bier,
 The dew of heaven his only tear ;
 And sighs of eve alone were here,

Rustling the light leaves o'er his head,
As if they mourned the Warrior dead ;
Making his stillness seem more still ;
More sad the shade of grove and hill.

Here shall he rest till distant day,
In the deep forest's untrod way,
Coffined in steely arms alone ;
And, for carved sepulchre of stone,
And foliaged vault of choral-aisle,
The living oak, with darker smile,
Shall arch it's broad leaves o'er his form.
Poor shroud and guard from sun and storm !
The woodlark shall his requiem sing,
Perched high upon his branchy tomb ;
And every morn, though morn of Spring,
Shall o'er him spread a mournful gloom ;
And every eve, at twilight pale,
His chantry-bird shall sweetly wail ;
And glow-worms, with their watch-torch clear,
Wait mutely round his grassy bier,
Keeping aloof from his dark rest
Reptiles, that haunt the hour, anblegt ;

Till other Morn her cold tear shed,
And 'balm anew the soldier dead.

XI.

There was, who, from her distant bower,
Watched all that day St. Alban's tower,
As if its visage could have shown
The dreadful tale it looked upon,
And told to her the doubted fate
Of him, on whom her fears await,
Who joined King Henry, on that morn.
Oh! shall he to his shades return,
And through the oak's broad foliage view,
Once more, the vale and mountains blue?
May then their peaceful branches wave
High welcomes o'er his knightly plume.
Or, shedding deep their saddening gloom,
Murmur low dirges o'er his grave?

XII.

Pale with anxiety and fear,
She in her silent bower must wait,
Her playful infants came not there;
Her spirits ill their songs could bear
While doubtful of their father's fate.

At times came messenger from far,
 With various rumours of the war,
 " His lord had late been seen in fight !"
 So told the fleetest of the flight.
 Another had beheld him all,
 When Warwick burst the barrier wall,
 A third, report of fell wound brought ;
 A fourth, that vainly he was sought.
 Slight rumours all—yet each some dread of ill,
 In heart of lovely Florence did instill.

XIII.

In oriel and in alley green
 By turns she sat, or walked, unseen.
 Th' unfolding buds of Spring were there,
 Breathing delight upon the air.
 Health, life, and joy, by song of birds
 As well are told, as if by words,
 Those opening buds, that breath of joy,
 That song of birds did but annoy
 Attention, that for faintest sound
 Listened from Alban's fearful ground,
 Oft on the calm there seemed to float
 Murmur confused—a trumpet's note,—

Dull beatings of a charger's hoof—
 The sharper clash of arms aloof—
 Tumultuous shout—the onset cry—
 Signal of some, that meet and die.—
 Whose summons heard she that call?
 Oh! AT THAT moment who might fall!

XIV.

Attention each fine sound pursued,
 Till doubt and distance seemed subdued
 She listened then, as if her ear
 Could bring each phantom of her fear
 In real shape before her sight.
 There glowed the terrors of the fight!
 She saw her loved lord wounded sink.
 And slowly from the battle shrink,
 With not a hand his arm to stay,
 Or help him, where he bleeding lay.
 Farther she dared not—could not, think.

XV.

Aghast and motionless, in trance,
 While such terrific visions glance,
 She rose up from her pale despair,
 His fate to soften, or to share!

And she, who from a summer shower
Would fly to covert of a bower ;
Whom thunder tortured with alarm,
Though sheltered in his faithful arm ;
Who lived in privacy's safe round,
And joys in cares domestic found
(The cherub-smile of infancy, .
The look of love, still watching by) ;
Whose heart would to best music move—
The music breathed by breath of love,
The music of Affection's eye—
That varied world of harmony !
Even she renounced all feeble fear,
Ppressed by a danger more severe ;
And felt the spirit of the brave,
When her mind caught the hope to save.

XVI.

Till near the falling of the sun,
It was not known the fight was done ;
And then, that lady's messenger,
With face, that spoke before his tongue,
Of horrors, that round Alban throng,

Brought heavy news of Lancaster ;

But tidings of her lord came none !

A dreadful silence wrapt his name—

The pause, ere falls the lightning's flame,

Might be just image of the same.

Without a tear, without a sigh,

She read dismay in every eye,

Unbreathing calmness o'er her face

Now veiled, with melancholy grace,

Her courage,—moral courage,—love,

That soon their truth and strength must prove.

XVII.

One ancient servant, faithful found,

She chose to guide her on her way,

And search with her the blood-stained ground,

Where dead and wounded still might lay.

In vain that humble steward sought

To win her from such daring thought,

And told the dangers that await

Wide round St. Alban's bleeding gate,

And she, who ne'er had viewed the face

Of slaughtered man, how might she trace,

How bear to look upon the field,
 Where their last breath the vanquished yield !
 How search for face of her dear lord,
 Or, finding, live and aid afford !

XVIII.

Florence a forceful sigh suppressed,
 "Haste ! not a moment may we rest.
 Such aid even now he needs ; away !
 He bleeds—he dies, while we delay !" —
 "How, lady, may you reach the town,
 On public road, unseen, unknown ;
 And seen and known, how, prison-free,
 Escape the grasp of enemy ?
 A shorter path perchance might lead
 O'er open ground of heath or mead ;
 But that was viewed by every eye.
 While through the forest's closer way,
 The dim paths far and widely stray.
 How reach the guarded barrier ?
 And, lady, how might you endure
 The weary path ; or how procure
 The pass of posted warrior !" —

“ My purse such posted guard shall gain,
 My palfrey bear me, while he may ;
 My purpose will my steps sustain ;
 Away—to horse ! away, away ! ”

XIX.

By sense of duty thus upheld,
 By strong affection thus impelled,
 Florence must quit her sheltered home,
 O'er desolated tracks to roam.
 In chamber, gallery, orieled-hall,
 Her home was deadly stillness all ;
 But stillness without peace—more drear
 Such stillness, than the War's career !
 It seemed, as through the hall she passed,
 Murmured a mourning trumpet-blast.
 She turned, as sad it died away,
 And, while the slanting western ray
 Played through a casement's ivy wreath,
 And touched the armoured shape beneath,
 That stood, like guardian of the hall,
 By stair, where fearful shadows fall,
 She thought the corslet heaved, as life
 Was there beneath, with death at strife.

Perhaps, 'tis glance of ivy-leaves
Trembling in light her eye deceives.

xx.

Short pause she made within the court ;
Her steed received her as in sport,
When fresh from cheer of green-wood shade
Though now no soft caress she laid

Upon his glossy neck, or face,

Nor gave him word of gentle grace.

Yet did he know her, though the 'guise
Might wrap her from a stranger's eyes ;
And pawed the ground, in mantling joy,
And arched his crest, and turned his eye,
And champed the bit, with nostril wide,
And laid his playful head aside,
As asking welcomes from her hand,
And suing for it's light command.

xxi.

Old Leonard led through forest-way,
And pointed where St. Alban's lay,
With look of grave and anxious thought,
The sun those lofty turrets brought

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•

Full on the eye, that, at their sight,
 Sickened and darkened, as in night.
 Yes, though she felt the western blaze,
 Strange gloom, all cheerless, met her gaze.
 She saw the sun—she knew his beam,
 Yet seemed in dimness of a dream!
 With mingled grief and terror filled,
 Her spirits scarce their task fulfilled;
 Yet did her will its purpose hold,
 As might the boldest of the bold.
 Right onward, as the path might go,
 She pressed, to meet the coming woe.
 The fanning air her frame sustained,
 And firmly still her steed she reined.
 Though on the Abbey-tower her eye
 Was fixed—that tower would seem to fly;
 For, though at utmost speed she went,
 More distant seemed its battlement;
 And, though she knew her palfrey moved,
 That he went forward was not proved.

XXII.

Though true and good the long-loved steed,
 His weary limbs relaxed their speed.

He marvelled at the pace she hid,
 And would resent the whip she plied,
 (Unused to feel the goading pain,
 And fretting with a high disdain,
 Had other hand but held the rein.
 Often would Leonard now implore
 That, till the forest-shades were o'er,
 His lady, for his master's sake,
 Some caution for herself would take,
 Nor tempt St. Alban's dangerous wall,
 Ere deepest gloom of evening fall.
 The sun was yet upon the towers,
 And lighted yet her roofs and bowers.

XXIII.

Florence once turned her weary sight,
 And, in the landscape's beamy light,
 Viewed the peaked roofs and glittering vane.
 Where slept, in peace, her infant-train.

A sigh—the first she long had known—
 Burst from her breast, and fell a tear ;
 But 'twas not grief she felt, nor fear ;
 'Twas desolation, hopeless, drear !

She seemed in this vast world alone ;

'Reft of her joy, her guide, her might,
Even life itself was desert night.

XXIV.

St. Alban's, onward as they drew,
Spoke fearful symptoms of the war ;
Tumultuous murmurs, cries afar,
Wild roar, that distance did subdue ;
And oft, from path unseen, was heard
Horse-tramp, or shout, or solemn word ;
And heavy sounds of woe and pain
Led to the steps of wounded men,
Unhorsed and plundered of their arms
And jealous still of new alarms.
These Leonard questioned of the fate
Of friends within St. Alban's gate,
While Florence, with attention dread,
Apart, in silence, bent her head.
Little he learned ; for scant they knew,
'Wildered in tumult of the fight,
Of what had passed beyond their view ;
But in one tale they all unite—
The plundering fury of the foe

On those whom they o'ertake in flight,
And their relentless, coward blow ;
All urge the strangers to beware,
Nor Alban's fatal barrier dare.

XXV.

Then ancient Leonard urged anew
The dangers would her course pursue ;
And Florence yielded now her ear,
By truth warned, not by idle fear.
He led where steed might hardly go
Under the stretching, beechen bough,
A scene of deep repose and gloom,
Hushed as some lonely aisle, or tomb—
So hushed, that here the bird of May
Amid the leaves began her lay ;
Not the known lay of joyous morn,
But midnight hymn, sad, sweet, and lorn ;
Yet sometimes, as her cadence fell,
Strange mournful murmurs seemed to swell—
Sounds indistinct and dark, to wail,
Or darkly hint, some dreadful tale.

XXVI.

Sudden, where opening branches yield,
 Florence beheld the tented field,
 Beneath St. Alban's walls afar,
 Spread with the various lines of war.
 Broad, moving masses she might view,
 And hurrying bands of gleamy hue
 Preparing for the coming night
 And trains of horse, whose armour bright
 Flashed radiance to the western light ;
 And trumpet-signals faint were heard
 And far—halloo and shouted word.
 All that there lived, seemed strong in strife,
 But 'twas for comforts, not for life—
 All that there lived !—alas, that thought !
 What strife of hope and fear it brought !
 While o'er the scene St. Alban's tower
 Looked sternly on the passing hour.

XXVII.

To this wild scene of war's array,—
 Where busy atoms of a day,
 Entrusted with brief rule, had proved
 By what slight springs their force is moved,

Opposed—great Nature tranquil lay.
 Though on the hills, far to the West,
 Dark thunder-shadows awful rest,
 There power and grandeur seem combined
 With stillness, as of brooding mind.
 The purple gloom lay deep and wide,
 Save where the umbered splendours glide
 Broadly and silent o'er the vale,
 And touch with life the forests pale.

XXVIII.

While Florence watched, beneath the shade,
 The camp in Key's-Field now arrayed,
 She shrunk, as danger seemed more near,
 Yet found impatience conquering fear;
 And, urging on a rapid flight,
 Ere hindered by advancing night,
 She looked, perchance, upon the way,
 Where now her dying husband lay!
 Urged by such thought, she paused no more;
 And, as the Abbey's guardian roof
 Might shield him, should the last be o'er,
 There would she seek her first dread proof.

XXIX.

She turned her steed, and gave the rein,
But checked awhile his course again,
As from by-way and near she heard
A slow wheel pressing the green-sward.
It bore, beneath the veiling shade,
Some wounded chieftain lowly laid.
In dread attention Florence sees,
As the light steals through parted trees,
The mute train turn the jutting bank,
 (Where the high beech, of silver rind,
Caught the slant sunbeam ere it sank,)
 And through the deepening forest wind.
The level radiance, shooting far
Within the shadows, touched that car ;
And, glancing o'er a steely crest,
Flushed the wan visage in it pressed.
Too distant fell the slanting light
To bring the features forth to sight ;
But played on falchions drawn around,
Guarding their chief o'er dangerous ground ;
And gleamed upon the silver badge,
Of lofty servitude the pledge.

XXX.

Florence restrained the impulse strong,
 That would have forced her to that throng,
 And Leonard hastened to explore
 Some signal of the Chief they bore,
 While she, within the deepest gloom,
 Watched, as for sentence of her doom.
 She marked, when he o'ertook the chief,
 No gesture of surprise, or grief.
 Soon, where the broader foliage shed
 It's gloom o'er woodbanks high and steep,
 Beyond the warriors' way there creep
 A sandaled group with hooded head,
 Silently from the umbrage deep.
 This pilgrim-band might scarce be known,
 Clad in their amice grey,
 From tint of boughs with moss o'ergrown ;
 But that some clasp, or chainlet shone,
 And ruddy tinge their faces own
 Of the full Western ray.

XXXI.

As from the pass that shadowy train
 Sought Alban's sheltering aisles to gain,

Unknowing that the war's sad course
 Had thither brought Duke Richard's force,
 Sudden, the wounded Chief they meet,
 And, doubting, wondering, pitying, greet.
 Leonard, while he drew near, o'erheard
 The meeting Pilgrim's hailing word,
 And question, on the spreading war,
 And who was borne upon the car?
 There lay Earl Stafford, wounded sore,
 Whom Buckingham must long deplore:
 Then prompt good wishes they exchange,
 State of the roads and pass declare,
 Give news of war, and counsel fair
 How best the Pilgrims may arrange
 Their distant way, through secret path,
 To gain, ere night, some quiet hearth.

XXXII.

Leonard asked tidings of his lord
 From all who, round that bleeding car,
 Halted with watchful eye and guard.
 And various rumours of the war
 They told, of chiefs slain, saved, or fled;
 Clifford and Henry too were dead:

Brief and unsure was all they said.
Baron Fitzharding? He was slain—
Some told, and some denied again.
Leonard, on mention of his death,
With eager look and trembling breath,
Straight to the Chief himself addressed
His question; who, how'er distressed,
Upraised with patient courtesy
His languid head, for brief reply:—
“ 'Twas said, that, early in the strife,
Fitzharding fell, yielding his life
To Richard's sword; but then such tale
Should not as certainty prevail;
For those engaged in ardent fight
Know not who falls beyond their sight.”

XXXIII.

Ere yet the hasty talk had passed,
Swelled on the calm a clarion's blast;
Then sudden and near shout thrilled high,
And pain and terror's mingled cry.
The Earl gave signal to proceed;
And wishes warm the conference close

For life and health and safe ~~passage~~
 The car then moved with feeble speed,
 Fixed in dismay the Pilgrims stood,
 Till Leonard, pointing through the wood,
 Told where a little dim path wound,
 Remote from Alban's fatal ground.
 Then bent he with the fearful tale
 To Florence. How may he prevail
 To lead her home? How soothe her woes,
 When his dire news he shall disclose?

XXXIV.

While she had watched his steps with doubt,
 She heard the faint pursuing shout,
 And marked where trailed the distant rout.
 But, even here, where all seemed lone,
 The dreariness was not her own :
 At times came nearer voice, and yell
 Of wandering bands, or bugle's swell
 In signal-call, or laughter loud,
 Horrid to her, as voice from shroud !
 Others there were who shunned the road,
 Anxious to reach some safe abode,

Ere yet the brooding tempest fell ;
For so the gestures seemed to tell
Of men, who, on the wild heath turned,
And pointing where the red gloom burned,
A moment paused, as if to say
“ How dark the storm comes on our way ! ”

XXXV.

Sudden, while Silence slept around,
Her courser listened, as if sound
Disturbed his watchful ear ;
With feet outstretched and rising mane,
Averted head and eyes, that strain.
He gazed, in stiffening fear ;
Then reared, and, with a restive bound,
He bore her from that fearful ground,
Ere she had aught perceived for dread,
Or sound had heard, that terror spread.
Vainly she tried to rein her steed ;
So docile late, he keeps his speed,
Though now they meet a haggard group,
Who, with fierce gesture and wild whoop,
Would check his rapid flight ;

Trying, when near, to snatch the rein ;
 To chase, when passed ; but still in vain ;
 He bears her from their might.

XXXVI.

Pencil alone may trace such woe
 As darkened faithful Leonard's brow,
 When he had reached the oak's lone gloom
 Where Florence dared to meet her doom,
 And found her not ! But, while around
 He searched the close embowered ground,
 A form terrific fixed his eyes.

Sheltered within the thickest shade,
 There lay a pale and dying head :
 In blood an armoured warrior lies !
 It was his lowly, faltering groan !
 His casque, where a stray light had shone,
 And might give glimpse of ghastly face.
 Betrayed him to the startled steed ;
 Who bore his mistress off at speed,
 Ere she his cause of fear could trace.

XXXVII.

Ere Leonard, 'neath the darksome bough,
 Might the dead form, or feature, know,

A fearful sound and shrill and high
Upon the rushing breeze went nigh.
A shriek it seemed—again he hears
The voice, that summoned all his fears.
Once more he listened, but the breeze
Rolled lonely o'er the bended trees,
And died, but, as it swelled again,
Brought on it's tide, that note of pain!
Leonard, ere yet the plaint might close,
Turned his good steed the way it rose.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

CANTO VI.

THE EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.³

SCENE—WITHIN THE TOWN AND ABBEY OF
ST. ALBAN'S.

I.

THOUGH now, within St. Alban's wall,
Was hushed the turmoil of the day,
The crash of arms, the Chieftain's call,
The quiet shout, the clarion's bray,
The stillness there was scarce less dread
Of those, who, looking on the dead,
In voice suppressed and trembling spake.
As if they feared the very sound,
Or, that it might disturb, or wake
The victims stretched around.
Yet, sometimes, 'mid this calm of fear,
Rose sudden cries of woe most drear
For friend or kinsman found.
But, though the slain filled all the ground,

No brother yet dared brother move,
 Or close his eyes with pious love ;
 And, though amid that ghastly band
 Lay chiefs and nobles of the land,
 Yet might no man his pity prove ;
 Nor herald take his fearful course,
 To know and name the new-made corpse.

II.

Earl Warwick ruled that wœful hour.
 What were compassion 'gainst his power ?
 How many, fallen upon that heap,
 Warm and alive, but succourless,
 Had there unnoticed found the sleep
 His will might never more distress !
 While he disputed, planned, arranged
 Ambition's little dream of fame,
 Or with his peers, or knights exchanged
 Some narrow points of rival claim.
 And thus it went till even-tide ;
 And then the mitred fathers' cry,
 That those who had, on each side, died,
 Should rest with equal honours here,
 Was coldly granted ; while a tear

Of saddest pity filled his eye,
 Who pleaded for such ministry.
 The monks, too, asked an armed band
 Might round their Abbey portals stand,
 And yet another guard their way,
 When they their pious dues should pay,
 And step amid th' unhallowed troop,
 Who o'er the dead and dying stoop.

III.

Then went the heralds on their round,
 Proclaiming forth the dead ;
 And, following on that blood-stained ground,
 York's plundering lancemen sped.
 And then, sustained by courage high,
 Pale brothers of the monastery,
 Solemn and still and sad went by ;
 Nor shrunk they, with an useless fear,
 To do their awful office here.

IV.

Then straight were borne to Alban's aisle,
 Rescued by guard from wanton spoil,
 Dead chief and prince and noble knight.

High plumed, and harnessed for the fight,
 To rest, all in their steely gear,
 In consecrated chapel there ;
 Knights, who that very morning rode
 Beneath the Abbey's tower,
 And hardly owned the earth they trod,
 Or any earthly power.
 So light in hope, so high in pride,
 Pranced they to battle, side by side :
 Now under Death's dim flag enrolled,
 Their transient story now all told ;
 Still, comrades, side by side, they go,
 And side by side, though shrined in brass,
 Must soon into oblivion pass ;
 Scarce word shall live, nor sign, to show
 What spirit's dust sleeps there below.

v.

'Twas well Duke Richard granted guard ;
 Much need had they of warlike ward—
 Those hooded monks and lay ;
 Since armour rich of men they bear
 The conquerors might strive to tear
 From the dead corpse away.

And hardly did the guardian sword,
Or written sign of Richard's word,
Deter from bloody fray.

And scarce the palls the Abbot sent
To shade the noble slain,

While through the open street they went,
Could hide bright casque, or chain.

Oft would a sullen murmur

From lancemen rude the porch beside,
That the rich armour they had won

Should be preserved for chieftain's pride

That they, who braved so much of toil,
Should share not in the hard-earned spoil.

They laughed in scorn, when it was said,
Such spoil would in the grave be laid,

Fit shrouding for a warrior dead.

Forty and nine of dead alone

Then bear they through the gate ;
And many wounded men unknown,
Their pious care and pity own ;

Too oft in dying state.

VI.

How mournful was the scene and dread
Of monks around those warriors dead,
Laid out in aisle and nave,
When, through the western window's height,
The red sun, ere he sunk in night,
His last sad farewell gave!
His beams a darkened glory threw,
Tinged with that gorgeous window's hue.
On every vault and arch on high ;
Glanced on each secret gallery,
And half unveiled it's mystery ;
While shrine and bier and form of woe
Lay sunk in shadows deep below.
Grand as the closing battle-hour,
Yet gloomy as it's fateful power,
Hovered that light above the slain,
Last light of their last day, and vain.

VII.

'Twas at this hour of twilight pale,
When curfew-bell gave heavy wail,
A Pilgrim to the Abbey came,
Brief rest and timely aid to claim.

While seated in Refectory

Thus did he to the warders state,

That, trusting to no bravery,

But to his honoured weed, his tate,

He passed alone the tented line

Of Richard's camp, his outer guard,

And the town barrier's watch and ward.

Now, when the Abbey-banded sign,

And answer due to their watch-word,

He ne'er before their pass had heard.

Then other means he tried to gain

The warders, and tried not in vain ;

His gift bestowed, he pressed his way.

Where dim the convent portal lay.

VIII.

Lofty and dark that porch arose,

By fits the vaulting shown,

When the tossed torch a red flash throws

O'er thick-ribbed arch and crowning rose,

And hooded face of carved stone.

While passed the dead and dying through.

There watched the Pilgrim, hid from view.

Within a turret's dusky stair,
Whence he might note what corpse they bear ;
He watched, with fixed and tearless eye,
The warrior's death-march crowding by.

IX.

Under the gloom of portal door,
On bier and shield while soldiers bore
The hopeless wounded and the dead,
Pale monks with lifted torches led,
And Abbey-knights in silence ward ;
Following came lancers, as rear-guard.

The dying forms, then passing by,
Showed every shade of misery,
Mingling with warlike pageantry,
Some lay in quilted brigandine,
Others in polished armour shine,
And some in surcoat blazoned high.
Some were in bossed and damasked steel,
With threatening crest and plumed head ;
These the closed helmet-bars conceal.
On others the raised vizor shed
A shade athwart the eyes more dread

Even than the wounds it might expose.

And some there were, whose shroud-like mail,
 Binding the chin and forehead pale,
 Would all the dying look disclose !
 O ! that poor look, that sinking eye,
 When glanced a light from torch on high,
 Held by some mute o'erbending monk,
 Of ghastly air and visage shrunk ;
 Whose wanness, though of different hue
 From his, that lay beneath his view,
 Yet, seen beside the living tint
 Of men, who bore the corpse away,
 Seemed but a fleeting shadowy hint
 Of one, who had lived yesterday,
 As with still step he passed along
 The wounded and the dying throng.

x.

Once, as the grave's dark guests pass by,
 The Pilgrim's sad and bursting sigh
 Betrayed him in that shaded nook ;
 And, as the sound fell on the ear
 Of monk, attendant on the bier,
 He raised his torch around to look.

It showed him but the portal-roof,
 The studded gates, long battle-proof,
 The low-browed door and turret-stair,
 And not the dark weed resting there.
 And, had he spied that pilgrim-weed,
 The form beneath he might not read,
 Nor guess the world there hid, the fears,
 The trembling thought, that sees and hears,
 In every shape, in every sound,
 Image, or hint of grief profound ;
 The pang, that seeks the worst to know,
 Yet shrinks, and shuns the meeting woe,
 Affection's pang, o'er-watching care,
 And, sickness of the heart ! despair.
 Yes ; it was Florence there who stood,
 Watching each passing corpse,
 And waiting till a firmer mood,
 Might bear her on her course.

XI.

And, when the mingled crowd was passed
 Of living and of dead,
 And the great portal, closed so fast,
 Echoed no sound of dread,

On noiseless foot pale Florence paced
 The Abbey-court—and cloister traced
 And hall and chamber's gloom.

Forsaken gallery, dim stair,
 Remote from steps of ceaseless care.

East thronging round the tomb,
 No voice through stillness stole, no sound
 Through all the widely vacant round.
 Door after door, in long display,
 Still led where distant chambers lay
 Shown by fixed lamp, or taper's ray.

XII.

By such ray, trembling on the gloom,
 She passed through many a vaulted room,
 In one she paused, flung back her hood,
 And, with an eager frenzy, viewed
 What, silent, in the centre stood.
 The board, that feasted living guest,
 Behold! was now the dead man's rest!
 For banquet-cloth—a winding sheet!
 That, lifted by the face and feet,
 Veiled, yet made known some form of death,
 Laid out, unwatched, unwept, beneath!

Honour had watched his living course,
 Terror and Pity wound his corpse,
 But Sorrow bends not by his bier !
 Though now, perchance, her steps are near.

XIII.

A shuddering instinct yet withheld
 Florence from seeking, who was veiled ;
 And even the dread uncertainty
 Whose countenance she here might see—
 Even this seemed momentary shield
 From truth, that might be there revealed.
 With eyes fixed on that winding shroud,
 Powerless she stood beside the dead ;
 Came o'er her sight a misty cloud ;
 Through all her frame a tremour spread
 A stillness of the heart—a trance
 Held her, like statue in advance ;
 One hand just raised to lift the veil,
 But checked, as life itself must fail.
 If one loved face should there lie pale.
 A moment passed—she raised the shroud,
 Fell o'er her sight a darker cloud !

No cry she uttered; dropp'd no tear;
But sunk beside the Warrior's bier.
There by a lay-monk was she found,
When passing on his wonted round;
There, like a broken lily, laid
Half-hid, within her pilgrim-shade;
And thence, with hopeless care, convey'd.

Though closed the Abbey's outer gate,
Still, through low porch and postern-door,
Pikemen the dead and dying bore
To the near aisles, where monks await,
And watch around th' expiring chief,
With aiding pity, silent grief;
And every form of horror view,
Yet calm their duteous task pursue.
Clement, the Monk, was, on this night,
Shrine-watcher on the southern aisle,
Pacing o'er brass-bound graves the while,
By the pale, sickly, waning light
Of yellow tapers, ranged in state
O'er tombs of the departed great.

Under the transept's shined shade
No victim of the war was laid ;
Yet, as with slow and heavy tread
Passed on the bearers of the dead,
Clement a prayer of requiem said.

XV.

From these new relics of War's rage
Turning, it did his pain assuage
To look on marble sepulchre,
And ponder Latin register
Of those, who ruled here in past age.
He thought of FREDERICK THE BOLD,
Laid out in monumental brass,
Who, casting off his cope of gold,
Armed at all points stood in the pass,
When Norman William came of old ;
And, sprung himself from royal race,
(Canute, the Dane, spoke in his vein)
Defied the Conqueror to his face.
Clement now almost saw his form—
That warlike Abbot, rising dim

From the grave's sleep, as roused by storm,
 Of battle, then approaching him ;
 And could have thought his armour's gleam
 Did through the chancel-shadows stream ;
 Nay that his very shape stood there,
 With face all haggard, wan and spare,
 And plumage stirring o'er his crest,
 As if wild horror it expressed.

xvi.

Was this a vision that he viewed,
 Wrought by o'erwatching of the mind ?
 It seemed along the shade to wind,
 And rest in thoughtful attitude.
 All in the aisle was lone and still,
 But from the distant nave a thrill,
 A murmur deep and stifled broke ;
 Where monks, as they the dead laid out,
 In voice of strange lamenting spoke.
 As if half fearing, half devout.
 Clement, the way that moaning came,
 One moment turned his eye :
 What was it shook his lofty frame ?
 What wrung from him that sigh

He drew upon his face his hood,
 Deep rapt awhile in thoughtful mood ;—
 When able to lift up his mien,
 On the choir-step that vision stood,
 That unknown shade, so dimly seen.
 So woe-begone and stern it's look,
 The Monk with sudden terror shook.
 He signed himself, and passed the way
 Where other shrine-watch yet might stay.

XVII.

It waved him back with lofty sign,
 Then trod the aisle alone,
 In stately step, to Catherine's shrine,
 And spoke in stifled tone.
 But Clement, still o'ercome with dread,
 Before that warlike image fled.
 It was no phantom that stood there,
 But a true knight of Lancaster ;
 Who, 'mid a crowd of monks, that bore
 A warrior through St: Mary's door.
 Had here a dreadful refuge ta'en
 Among the dying and the slain.

He craved of Clement secrecy,
 That he might here in shelter be,
 Having escaped, at midnight hour,
 From those, who watched around this tower.

XVIII.

The Monk, well pleased with fear to part,
 And aid Lancastrian Knight distressed,
 Welcomed the stranger to his heart,
 And freely granted all his quest.
 He pointed to a little stair
 Wound upward o'er the transept there ;
 He pointed, but they heard, remote,
 Dull, measured footsteps fall,
 And saw through Mary's portal float
 Slowly, a sable pall.
 Distant, upon the aisle it turned,
 Where Gloucester's chantry tapers burned.
 The stranger stood, with brow intent
 Upon that mournful vision bent :
 So pale and still, though stern; his look,
 Image he seemed, forsook of life,
 But that his cresting plumage shook,
 And told of passion's strife.

All reckless of himself he stood,
 While on the bearers drew,
 Till Clement roused him from his mood,
 And led him from their view.

XIX.

Within a little secret door
 Of this side aisle, they now explore
 A stair, that goes within the wall
 To galleries on high ;
 These run behind close arcades small
 Along the transept nigh.
 The arches round, the pillars short,
 (With capitals uncarved and square,)
 Changing each single arch to pair,
 Seem by rude hand of Saxon wrought,
 Or Norman William's earliest train :
 So massy is their shape and plain.
 Hid in these galleries, unknown,
 A stranger long might be,
 Yet on the shrines and tombs look down,
 And all there passing see.
 Such channels run, in double tier,
 Through every aisle and transept here ;

Yet goes not one, unchecked, the round
And bendings of this mystic ground,
But, broke by window, arch, or pier,
The narrow way is often found.

XX.

Within that little secret door,
A few steps of the Choir before,
Clement the mournful stranger led,
While passed, upon his funeral bed,
Unwept, unknown, that warrior dead.
The pall had shifted from its hold,
And showed a casque of steel and gold,
A LION PASSANT crest ;
And, just beneath the vizor raised,
The eyes, for ever fixed and glazed,
A warrior's death confessed.
Two men-at-arms stepped slowly near
A Poursuivant, before the bier ;
And, as they passed, the Knight could hear
The watch-monk, Clement, feebly say,
" Who passes to his grave, I pray."

The herald deigned not word to give,
Save " Live King Henry ! Henry live !—"
The Knight then, in his secret call,
No longer might his feelings quell ;
But stepped upon the aisle to learn,
What friend or comrade he must mourn.

XXI.

The bier had passed away the while,
The herald at it's side,
And, as he turned upon the aisle,
Where nave and choir divide,
The stranger did PORTCULLIS know,
And princely Somerset laid low.
With bended head and downward eye,
He mused in grief to see
The Chief so oft of victory,
Whom last he viewed 'mid banners high
And trumpets' pride and shout of joy.
While thus the warrior dwelt in thought,
The Monk, respectful of his pain,
No word of consolation sought,
Impertinent and vain ;

But watched him, with a low-breathed sigh,
 And look of gentle sympathy :
 Till the Knight, fearing further stay,
 Turned round and signed the Monk away ;
 And Clement led him up the flight,
 That opened on the gallery height.

XXII.

The beams, that rose from shrine and tomb,
 Broke on that stair-flight's distant gloom,
 As now the Knight and Monk ascend ;
 And, seen beyond low arches there,
 Tall fretted windows rose in air,
 And with the transept-shadows blend
 Dim form of warrior and of saint,
 Traced gloomily by moonbeam faint.
 These words the Monk at parting gave,
 " Sir Knight, whatever you may see
 Within this hidden gallery,
 Sir Knight, be watchful, mute, and brave :
 The way is little known,
 And you are safe from human ill

If you shall secret be and still :-

“ I leave you not alone !”

The Stranger yielded to his will,

But answer made he none.

Yet much he mused on the dark word,
That might some inward hint afford
Of those he feared, this night, to see
Changed by Death's awful mystery.

XXIII.

Within the pillared arch, unseen,

He stood and looked beneath ;

Transept and aisle lay deep between

This angle and the Nave's long scene

Of suffering and death.

Obscure in that far distance, lay

This scene of mortal misery ;

And, where tall arches rose,

Each arch, discovering the way

To what beyond might passing be,

Did some dread group disclose.

Pale phantoms only seemed to glide

Among the torches there,

And stoop upon the tomb's low side,

In busy, silent care :

Unseen the deathly form below,

Unseen the pale, reflected woe

On miens, that each woe shams ;

The sable cowl appeared alone,

Or glimpse of helm, or corslet, shown

By the red torch's glare.

XXI.

Distinct, no sound arose, nor word

Along the vaults and arches spread,

Save that low murmur, shrill and dread,

Which in the Choir the Warrior heard ;

While still the heavy march, afar,

Brought on new victims of the war.

Down the long south aisle swept his eye,

Upon whose verge two hermits lie ;

Athwart that aisle, in farthest gloom,

The frequent torch was seen to glide,

Borne by the heralds of the tomb ;

And, hurrying to the cloister-side,

Lay-monks oft bore upon the bier,

EVENING AFTER THE BATTLE.

Into the dormitory near,
Bodies where life might yet abide.
And, ever as the Knight beheld,
Those mournful shadows go,
Terror and high impatience swelled,
The fate of friends to know

XXV.

Then sadly he withdrew his eye
From scene of Death's dark pageantry,
Shaped out in garb so strange,
And bent it on the view below,
The southern transept's gorgeous show,
In long and ordered range
Of chantry, chapel, and of shrine,
Where lights for ever were to shine,
And priests for ever—ever pray
For soul of those, whose mortal clay
Within the still, cold marble lay.
On high, the broad round arches rose,
That prop the central tower,
Where, north and south, the long roof goes,
That either transept grandly shows
In full perspective power

Dimly those arches hung in night,
Interminable to the sight.

While rose the noisy piers to view,
The distant torch their shadows threw
Broad, dark, and far around.

Like Warders o'er this gloomy ground,
Those Norman pillars stood and frowned.

XXVI.

On either side, in transept-wall,
Where rise four pointed arches small,

Now silent, dark and lone
Four dedicated chapels lay,
Receding from the open way,
Whence rose due orison.

Tapers beamed on each altar there,
'Mid image carved and picture fair.
In one the priest sang nightly prayer
For Tynemouth's Prior, Delamere,
Once ruler of the Abbey here.

Not that within this chapel's shade,
His confined bones were ever laid ;
But in the chancel, graven on brass,
His stately form, with mitred head,

Still guards his low and silent bed,
Where he such happy hours did pass.
Calm is the countenance and wise
With lids, that shade the thoughtful eyes.
So exquisite the graven plate,
So fine the form, so old the state,
Oh! may it long be spared the fate
Of other sad memorials near,
Torn ruthlessly from reverend bier
Of abbot, knight, of prince and peer.

XXVII.

As now the Stranger caught some strain,
Memorial of the newly slain,
Or heard the tender notes that plead
For spirit freed from mortal weed,
Pity and grief his eyes oppressed,
And tears fell on his warrior's breast ;
Such requiem might his father need!
He turned him from the moving strain,
And paced the gallery dim again ;
With quick unequal step he paced,
And oft that gallery retraced.

Once, as he reached the farther end,
Another pathway, low and small,
Winding within the eastward wall,
Seemed far away to bend.

END OF THE SIXTH CANTO.

CANTO VII.

SCENE IN THE MONASTERY.

I.

THE Warrior stood, and marvelled where
The secret way he spied might go,
Whether to turret high in air,
Or to some penance-cell below ;
When, as he looked, a beam of light
Dawned through the gallery's long night.
He passed upon that silent way,
And came where many a darting ray
Through the broad Saxon mouldings stray
Of a deep, jealous door,
With massy iron studded o'er.
Unclosed it stood, yet nought between
Of cell, or winding stair was seen.

II.

He paused, and anxious bent his head,
 For a faint wailing seemed to rise,
 Like that of mourner o'er the dead ?

He would not mourner's tears surprise.
 But soon the murmur died remote,
 Nor any sounds on silence float.
 It might have come from hearse of death,
 In chancel-aisle, unseen, beneath.
 He passed the jealous Saxon door,
 And stepped upon a covered floor !
 Within appeared a chamber small,
 Crowned with a vaulting, rich and tall,
 With slender central staff for stay,
 Whence the traced branch of leaf and flower
 Spread, like a shadowing summer-bower,
 Where evening's slant-beams stray,

III.

A velvet-curtain, drawn aside,
 Showed bay-recess, of fretwork pride,
 Where, on the window's stately brow,
 Vision of angels strove to glow,
 As waiting orison below ;

For there an altar was arrayed,
And consecrated tapers shone,
That such poor feeble homage paid,
As mortals pay by forms alone,
Beneath that curtain's sweeping fold
Were ancient reliques, set in gold ;
And, open on the altar, se
A missal, gold and velvet bound,
And on the step, just pressed by knee,
A cushion 'broidered round.
The down had not regained it's sheen,
Where the low bended knee had been,
Yet there no living step was seen.

IV.

The moon kept her still watch on high,
'Mid surges of a stormy sky ;
And, on the fretted window's pane,
Illumined the rich pencilled stain
Of groups, that wake and die,
As sweeps the varying shadow by.
Now, as those angel-forms appear
And vanish in the shaded air,

Most strangely seemed each transient face
Some guardian spirit of the place.

A moment stood the Knight to gaze
Upon this chapel's circling bound ;
The blazoned walls showed helpful phrase.

And the high scenes of holy ground.
O'er an arched door, that caught his view,
St. Andrew's shielded sign he knew,
Carved on the stone, and, close beside,
This Abbey's mitre-crest of pride,
Another shield, with wheat-sheaf, near,
Spelt of the Abbot ruling here,
Wheathampstede of the lengthened days.

A moment stood the Knight, to gaze
Upon the bending form above,
As watchful in its fretted cove,
The sainted bishop—Bishop Blaize.

VI.

Another form, of air serene,
Above the Saxon door was seen :
Saint Dunstan, he, whose harp all lone
Sounded in such celestial tone,

As if from airy choir, at eve,
 Whom mortal eyes may not perceive.
 With careful pause the Stranger viewed
 That Saint's enraptured attitude,
 A crystal lamp, suspended high,
 Touched with keen light his upward eye ;
 As if a beam of heavenly ray
 Fell, while he watched a seraph's way,
 And listened, in mute ecstasy
 The slow ascending strains decay.
 So fine the passion of his eye,
 It seemed to speak both tear and sigh ;
 And the fallen drop upon his cheek
 Spoke more than words themselves may speak.

VII.

He passed the door with cautious tread ;
 It to a vaulted chamber led,
 With storied tapestry dressed around ;
 A screen of carved oak was it's bound.
 In lofty oriel, light and rich,
 O'er-canopied, like mural niche,
 King Offa, as the moonbeams glide,
 Glimmered, in pall of purple pride.

Above, the trefoil-traced pane
 Displayed, in bright and varied stain,
 Th' allusive arms, or cognizance,
 Of Abbots, long departed thence.
 This bay looked on the platform green
 Of Abbot's cloister, that was seen
 In streamy light and slanting shade,
 By the tall transept's turret made.
 From it's bowed roof a silver light
 Hung, and a trembling radiance shed
 O'er the worn brow and hoary head
 (With snow of seventy winters white)
 Of a lone form, that sat beneath
 Pallid and still, as shape of death.
 The Abbot, in his mitred chair,
 Wearied with grief and watch, slept there.
 And, from such deep and kind repose,
 Such seeming peace of heart as now
 Beams blessedness around his brow,
 Oh ! must he wake to former woes ?

VIII.

To the armed Knight who near him stood,
 He seemed a Saint in tranced mood,

Or who had breathed his soul away,
And left below the pallid clay
Impressed with sign of heavenly bliss,
Instead of mortal happiness.
On the high desk beside him lay
The blessed Sriptures, shown by light
Of waxen tapers, branching there.--
The study, that had closed his day,
And calmed the terrors of the night
With heavenward hope and heart-felt prayer.
His crown of earthly honour stood
Behind him, and a purple hood
Half shrouded, in it's stead, the snow
That slept, like moonlight, on his brow :
His vest and tunic of gold,
His ample train of graceful fold,
And all the pomp, that had arrayed
His presence, when the King was by,
Now dropped as cumbrous pageantry ;
He wore his robe of evening-shade.

IX.

The Stranger, careful, watched this vest ;
Scarce breathed the sigh, that heav'd his breast,

Nor even the gauntlet-hands ungrasped,
That, on his first approach, he clasped ;
Nor did his lifted step advance,
Lest any sound might break the trance,
That spread it's blessing veil of peace
Upon the sorrows of that face.
So rapt the Warrior stood and still,
His very plume obeyed his will.
Nor waved, nor trembled on the air,
But watched, like mourning honours, there.

x.

Changed were sleep's soothing visions now ;
A frown shot o'er the father's brow.
He breathed a deep, yet feeble moan,
As if his dreams had sorrow known ;
And shuddering with the muttered tone,
The fancied grief, his senses own,
He starts. A knight in armour there !
In silence by his sleeping chair !
How has he passed, unheard, unseen,
By those, who wait without the screen—
The page and chaplain waiting there ?
An armed knight before his chair !

XI.

He gazed, with startled, anxious eye,
 Yet marked, as soared the plume on high,
 The mimic red-rose, blooming by,
 And, where the vizor overspread
 Eyes, whose keen fire, through Pity's tear,
 A softened, trembling lustre shed,
 (As stars through fleecy clouds appear.)
 By that red-rose and gentle tear
 He knew a knight of Lancaster ;
 And by that glance, those features bold,
 That gallant air, that warlike mould,
 He knew his race and lineage old ;
 And, while his knee the Knight had bent,
 And reverently, with humble head,
 Craved shelter in his Abbey's nave,
 Meek from his chair the Father leant,
 And, with spread hands, his blessing gave
 And words of kindly import said.
 " Baron Fitzharding ! welcome here.—"
 The Abbot paused in generous fear.
 " Welcome ! alas ! that may not be,
 In lodgment with your enemy.

Ill-come! I fear, in this sad hour,
 Where you may rue Duke Richard's power;
 For here, this night, his court he keeps,
 While royal Henry captive sleeps."

XII.

Now, when he heard his King was there,
 Fitzharding all things well could dare,
 To see and greet his royal lord.
 But soon the Father's solemn word
 Assured him the attempt were vain.
 Duke Richard's guard and courtier-train
 So closely hemmed the conquered King,
 That such adventure might even bring
 Death on himself, and dread to all
 Sheltered within the Abbey wall.
 Nay, if the Baron here were seen,
 Request and bribe might fail to screen
 From Richard's sudden rage the life,
 Sought by him foremost in the strife.

XIII.

Fitzharding felt a flush o'erspread
 His cheek—and sternly raised his head,

At mention of request to shield
His life from him he sought in field ;
But checked his speech, and quelled his pride,
While he stood by the Abbot's side.
The Father spoke with pitying sigh,
" In secret cell you safe may lie
Till the dark storm has passed by ;
And such a shrouding cell is nigh,
But must be sought without delay,
For even here 'twere death to stay."
And, while he spoke, he looked behind
And listened, in his chair reclined—
'Twas but the hollow moaning wind.
And then he asked by what dark way
The Knight this chamber did essay ?

XIV.

Again a sound ; and now was heard
A heavy step draw nigh ;
He left unsaid th' attempted word,
And backward turned his eye,
Where, distant, stretched the oaken screen,
And paler grew his pallid cheek,

While his dim eyea the footsteps seek
Of one without—unseen.

He signed Fitzharding to depart

And wait within, till signal made :

But the firm Warrior's swelling heart

His lingering footstep stayed.

XV.

From the carved screen and ante-room
A Monk, with countenance of gloom,
Came forth with feeble pace and slow,
With frequent pause and stated bow ;
The shaven circlet on his head
No scapulary dark o'erspread,
Nor dimmed the pale lines on his brow,
Or the faint downcast eye below ;
Yet, as he came with sullen tread,
No word of fear or hope he said,
Till he had reached the Father's chair,
And bent him low in reverence there.
Then faint he spoke—" Duke Richard sends ;
He my Lord Abbot's will attends."

KVI.

Scarce had he said, when martial stride,
Quick, firm, and true, was heard without ;
A page the folded door threw wide,
And then arose a distant shout
Of men exulting in their choice :
From court beyond ; and nearer voice
Affecting to restrain the cheer,
As ill-timed and unseemly here ;
Then steps again, and ring of steel
From chainlet and from armed heel.
That voice burst on Fitzharding near,
Like trumpet on the charger's ear.
And even the Abbot's warning glance
Might scarce restrain the Knight's advance ;
Till the pale Father waved his hand
With look of absolute command,
And pointed whither he should go ;
So panted he to meet the foe,
Who held his royal master low.
No time for speech, or word, of grace ;
So near and rapid was the pace,

He scarce might close the Chapel door,
 Ere the Duke trod the Abbot's floor.
 Such present haste became him well,
 Whose lengthened councils and debate
 So long had made the Father wait,
 And kept him from his nightly cell
 Beyond the hour himself had named,
 For urging rights himself had claimed.

XVII.

Now, where small Gothic window drew
 It's open tracery in the wall ;
 Fitzharding, all unseen, might view
 Duke Richard in the Abbot's hall ;
 And, with stern interest, survey
 How he had borne the battle-day :—
 He, whom, last seen in narrow space,
 Fitzharding challenged face to face ;
 And surely had him prisoner made,
 But for his henchmen's sudden aid.
 Now by the Abbot's quiet chair
 He sat, with proud yet troubled air ;
 His plume and casque were laid aside,
 For lighter cap, of crimson pride,

Graced with the budding rose of snow :
 Dark was his eye, and flushed his brow :
 Ill pleased he seemed, though conqueror,
 As if but loftier sufferer ;
 And weariness his face o'erspread.
 Rough was each word, and hoarse, he said ;
 For loud command, debate and fray
 Had worn his voice, through that long day.

XVIII.

He came to claim the Abbot's word,
 That he would not in secrecy
 Shield a Lancastrian enemy ;
 And some were even there, he heard,—
 Some, he well knew, were in these walls,
 Ready anew to stir up brawls :
 Each such he claimed for prisoner ;
 They had provoked the cruel war.
 The Abbot, mild, yet firm, replied,—
 The Church must shelter those, who sought
 For sanctuary at her side ;
 Not mock the laws she always taught.
 He would not, dared not break her laws,
 However high the temporal cause.

If such men were these walls within,
Here must they rest, unsought, unseen.
He craved the Duke would not profane
The rights his duty must maintain.

XIX.

Richard gave prompt and brief reply,
That lightly he would ne'er defy
The Church's right of sanctuary ;
But these were times when such Church law
Would loose the chain, that held in awe
The guilty and the dangerous man.

He would not answer for the end,
How strict soe'er his orders ran,
If his men found an enemy
Were screened in aisle or monastery ;

Then must the Church herself defend !
'Twere better silently to yield,
For once, the sanctuary's shield,
And point where foes might lie concealed ;
Lest blood the Abbey-pavement stain,
And all the Church's guard were vain.

XX.

He paused—the Father silent sat,
Reluctant to provoke debate,
Though scornful of Duke Richard's threat ;
And, when his look the threatener's met,
His trembling limbs confessed his ire,
And, his eyes flashed with transient fire,
That glowed an instant on his cheek,
And thus his thronging thoughts might speak :
“ If blood on sacred ground be shed,
The punishment is sure and dread.”

XXI.

The prudent Abbot ceased awhile,
And calmed his eye and smoothed his brow ;
For he had 'seen Duke Richard's smile—
Dark smile of scorn ! portending woe.
“ I will not vouch my soldier's grace,
No, not in Alban's charest place !
His very shrine may be profaned ;
His very shroud with gore be stained :
Yield then my enemies in peace,
And then all fear and care may cease.”

XXII.

The Father, rising from his chair,
 In horror of Duke Richard's speech,
 And heedless of such fear or care,
 Disdained all words, that would beseech ;
 And thus he said, " An instant doom
 Falls on the wretch, if such there be,
 Who violates St. Alban's tomb,
 Or trespasses on sanctuary !
 Of all St. Alban's sons, not one
 But would avenge his Saint, or die,
 And triumph in such glory won,
 And yield his life without a sigh !
 And, for the rest, if soldier dare
 Rive private door or private stair,
 Or climb, in sordid search of prey,—
 For the LAST Ban let him prepare,
 The Ban I shudder but to say !
 Think you, my lord, I will betray
 My church, or break her smallest law ?
 Her thunders still her foes shall awe.
 To her high power then, yield the sway,
 The power, that even kings obey !

With reverend step tread honoured ground,
 With proud submission guard her bound."

XXIII.

Faintness came o'er the Father's face ;
 He paused ; then said with milder grace,
 " My lord, you granted Abbey-guard ;
 Give us not mockery for ward.—
 Now, spare my age and wearied state ;
 Spare me yet longer-drawn debate."

XXIV.

" Lord Abbot ! if, within your walls,
 By monkish hand one soldier falls,
 Blood will o'erflow your aisles, your halls :
 Revenge will then be soldiers' food !"
 Here Richard curbed his angry mood ;
 Then coldly said " he would not keep
 The Father from his timely sleep.
 Doubtless the guard would still prove good,
 While it was viewed with gratitude ;
 But certain chiefs, whom he would name,
 It was his firm resolve to claim :

They were now hid, as he had proof,"
And sheltered 'neath his Abbey's roof:
Those dangerous men must be resigned,
As the good monks would favour find."

Fitzharding, in the chapel near,
When he Duke Richard's lofty word,
Demanding certain chieftains, heard,
Felt shuddering dread for kinsman dear.
Breathless attention now he paid
To hear each claim, that Richard made.
At first, as every name went by,
This was the Father's prompt reply,
"He knew not that such Chief was here;
He might be—laid upon his bier."
Duke Richard then Earl D'Arcy named,
And the Knight's sire for prisoner claimed.
The Abbot paused; then faltering said,
"He lies within the Abbey—dead!"

XXVI.

In sudden shock of grief, the son
Clasped his strong gauntlet hands on high.

SCENE IN THE MONASTERY.

And moved with hasty step of one,
Who every fortune would defy,
Duke Richard turned a distant glance;
His looks his true surmise reveal;
“ Methought I heard the clash of steel !”
That voice recalled the Knight to sense;
He checked the footstep in advance.
Ill might his dread the Abbot hide,
Or the Duke’s searching eye abide,
As sternly from his chair he rose
The lurking danger to expose:—
“ I pray—Lord Abbot—pardon me,
If I suspect an enemy.”—
“ My Lord, no enemy is near,
Whom you have any cause to fear.
Pass not into my private cell,
Forbear, my Lord !—it were not well.”
The Abbot’s voice with terror shook,
But prudently he ruled his look.

XXVII.

Duke Richard paused, and turned away,
Awed partly by this just reproof;
But he had motives, too, aloof

From such as on the surface lay,
 For yielding to the Abbot's sway.
 "This sudden crash of hidden arms,"
 He said, "might justify alarms."—
 "No hidden arms are here, my lord ;
 And trust, I pray, my solemn word ;"
 (The Abbot spoke to be o'erheard)
 "Who first that sacred ground assails,
 Be he or enemy or friend,
 On him the Ban of Church prevails ;
 And he beneath that scourge shall bend.

XXVIII.

Slowly the Duke resumed his chair,
 " 'Tis well !" he said ; " so let it fare ;
 For that same chief, whom last I named,
 In this day's fatal business famed—
 For him, he rests within your wall,
 But not beneath the funeral pall ;
 He lives within your Abbey gate ;
 In chamber near, perchance, may wait."—
 He viewed the chapel-door, and frowned,
 Where the son sheltered in it's bound,

Thrilled by conflicting hopes and fears,
Those words of unmeant comfort hears.

XXIX.

Vainly the Father might deny
Such Chief were here in sanctuary ;
As vainly Richard spoke of proof,
That he now lived beneath this roof.
The Abbot told of monks, who viewed
The body stretched upon a bier,
And borne through aisle and chancel near ;
Such solemn proof could not delude !
The corpse passed Abbot Hugo's tomb,
At evening-bell, through twilight gloom,
While chantry-priests bewailed his doom !

XXX.

These words o'erheard, swift to the heart
Of the pale son their poison dart.
But Richard's accents, once again,
Assuaged the keenness of his pain :
He almost loved his direst foe,
Who thus threw hope upon his woe :
" How might they view," Duke Richard said,

" The visage of the warrior dead,
 If o'er it evening-gloom were spread ?"—
 The Abbót sadly smiled, and sighed,
 And falteringly, again replied :
 " The tapers on that chantry-shrine,
 As solemn witnesses, ſhould shine
 Full on the dead man's brow ;
 So those who chaunted requiem, know."

XXXI.

Duke Richard ſaid, " THAT MIGHT NOT BE.
 He had himſelf ſtrange certainty—
 Strange tale !—he would not farther ſpeak
 Of that, which made the bravest weak,
 Of Superſtition's gloomy ſpell ;
 But clear and ſimple fact would tell."
 And then he ſpoke of " certain men,
 Pikemen, on guard within the porch,
 (The curfew-bell was ſounding then)
 Who ſaw that Knight, in arms all plain,
 March by and paſs beneath the arch,
 Or ſaw him rather run than march,—
 They ſaw him by their own watch-torch !

He went before a warrior dead,
Yet heard they not his iron tread,
Though clad in arms from heel to head.
It might be that he stepped so light
To 'scape unknown the pikemen's sight.
They did not challenge him, 'twas true ;
But he passed clearly to their view.
His vizor up, his beaver down,
Disclosed the fixtness of his frown ;
Yet could they not his face have seen,
Like ghastly shade," they said, " between,
(Richard gave smile of satire keen)
But that a warder dropped his pike,
Which he might think just raised to strike,
And, as he turned a sudden glance,
Seeming to couch his demi-lance,
Their torch flashed full upon his brow,
And showed the frowning eye below.
Yet checked they not his path, through dread
Of thwarting spirit of the dead !
But, fixed by terror of his eye,
Watched him in warlike march pass by.

Thus to their Knight they story told
 Of spectre of a warrior cold.
 Such strange and wayward humours sway
 Men, who dread nought, on battle day !”

XXIII.

He ceased, while grave the Abbot sate,
 As pondering on some tale of fate ;
 And on his face an awful thrill
 Spoke, more than words, some dread of ill.
 Duke Richard felt that thrilling look ;
 His mind with wondering doubt was shook ;
 And, though he scorned each monkish spell,
 A secret dread he might not quell
 Lay on his soul, like sullen gloom
 On hills, ere yet the storm is come.
 He spoke not ; all was still around
 In the wide chamber's dusky bound,—
 So still, you might have heard the sound,
 Far off and doubtful to the ear,
 Of that low, sullen thunder growl,
 From clouds, that on th' horizon scowl—
 The herald of the storm's career !—

So still, you might have heard a cry
 Of faint lament from distant aisle ;
 Or step, in secret gallery,
 Stealing upon some deed of guile ;
 Or whisper in the Chapel night,
 Of the lone Knight's heavy sigh.

XXXIII.

Still mused the Sire in deepest thought,
 His look with fearful meaning fraught.
 " 'Twas strange !" (at length he raised his face)
 Such warlike port and silent pace !
 And strange that soldiers at a glance
 Should stand appalled, nor step advance
 To thwart a living warrior,
 From whom in fight they would not stir."
 He mused again, with brow intent ;
 While Richard, silent, forward bent.
 The Father raised not up his head,
 While, pausing oft, he slowly said,
 " If such an image they have seen,
 I guess it wore not earthly mien.
 It might be spirit lingering near
 It's mortal corpse, borne on the bier.

And that same hour of curfew, too,
Tended to make the tale seem true.
That the guard failed to summon, straight,
Some reverend priest to th' Abbey gate
I marvel much : for such good men
Were gathered round the wounded then,
Whose presence and whose single word
Had stronger proved than pike or sword."

XXXIV.

Duke Richard checked a scornful smile,
And said, with meaning fraught with guile,
" Earl D'Arcy lives ; his son, perchance,
May rest here in some mortal trance,
And, by a strong similitude,
Have caused his semblance to delude.
But, if he live—that younger Knight,
Who sought me in this morning's fight,
Baron Fitzharding I would claim,
Though fire and sword should thwart my aim.
Nay, wife or kinsman I would take,
Till he surrendered for their sake !"

SCENE IN THE MONASTERY.

XXXV.

“ It could not be such knight, my Lord—”
The Abbot checked his thoughtless word,
And paused confused ; then tried to speak
While sudden crimson flushed his cheek ;
And, when again he raised his brow,
 He met Duke Richard’s searching glance,
 Fixed, watchful, o’er his silent trance,
And reading all his fears might show.
“ That knight,” said Richard, “ in the fray,
I drove in headlong flight away—”
Guileful he spoke—“ He fled my blow,
And fell by other hand, *they say.*”
Again, the Duke his dark eye bent
Upon the Abbot’s face, intent.

XXXVI.

But, ere the Father might reply,
The Baron’s step in Chapel nigh
 Confirmed his fearful agony.
Not tamely could Fitzharding hear
Richard’s false tales of flight and fear.
His heart and every nerve throbbed high

With indignation and disdain
 Of yielding to so foul a stain.
 He turned toward the chamber-door
 (So, for a moment, did he ~~er~~)
 To dare his artful slanderer,
 And grasped his sword—but checked his rage ;
 For shall the Father's chilling age
 Be shocked with view of human gore,
 Shed—even his feeble sight before ?
 And—for himself—was this a time
 To seek a contest, when no crime
 Could seem so great as victory,
 Or rouse such fell malignity,
 Or place him in such jeopardy ?

XXXVII.

But Richard had that footstep heard,
 And, while his eye with anger burned,
 He sternly to the Abbot turned,
 And claimed again his solemn word,
 Truly and promptly now to tell
 What footstep paced within his cell.
 He guessed that place did foe conceal,
 For surely it was foot of steel.

He grasped his dagger while he spoke,
 So did the thought his rage provoke.
 The Father, that the Knight might hear,
 Spoke loud—" My Lord, upon this ground
 You have not enemy to fear ;
 No man so desperate may be found
 To threaten life, or draw blood here."
 The Duke's dark aspect proved too well
 He read the Abbot's warning speech,
 And that he judged within the cell
 An enemy lay in his reach.
 He answered, " Ere from hence I go,
 You must yourself, Lord Abbot, show
 Who clad in arms, what warrior bold,
 Makes a monk's cell his secret hold.
 He bears, perchance, some noble name,
 And has achieved high deeds of fame ;
 Yet—him for prisoner I claim !"

XXXVIII.

While to these words his taunting eye
 Gave double point and energy,
 He rose, and near the Chapel drew ;
 But with deliberate step he went,

And gesture made, as if to sue
The Abbot for his full consent ;
And signed, that he should lead the way,
And from his cell dislodge the prey.
The Father, seeing it were vain
Longer the struggle to maintain,
Sought only to ward off the blow,
And warn the sheltered Knight to go
Toward the chapel, lingering slow,
He paced, and spoke in lofty tone
Duke Richard's name, and would alone
Have passed ; but this increased distrust,
And Richard, straight, the portal burst !

XXXIX.

All sullenly he gazed around
The pillared Chapel's lighted bound ;
A gloomy fire flashed in his eye,
The lightning of a stormy sky ;
Knight, priest, nor warrior, there was found.
But, when he saw St. Dunstan's door,
He strode athwart the solid floor ;
And, with a firm, impatient grasp,
Struggled to force the iron-chasp.

St. Dunstan seemed the pass to guard,
The Saxon door held faithful ward.

XL.

The Abbot, now no more subdued
By terrors for the Knight,
Quickly regained his tranquil mood,
And stood upon his right
Of undisturbed possession there,
Whether of chamber, cell, or stair.
He grieved intrusive step to see,
Profane his private sanctuary.
Duke Richard coldly said, " 'Twas plain
His enemies had not been thought
That sanctuary to profane,
Or here they had not refuge sought."

XLI.

He spoke ; and pointed to the sword
The Knight had laid, with pious word,
Upon the altar nigh,
When he had there himself resigned,
Where only he could comfort find,
And balm for misery !

Duke Richard held the sword aloof
 Before the Abbot, in sure proof
 He there had screened some enemy ;
 That sword the Father might not see
 But with a mingled agony
 Of gratitude, respect and fear,
 For him, who was, alas ! too near.

XLII.

With saintly smile the Abbot viewed
 This offering of a mind subdued ;
 Duke Richard, in amazement, frowned,
 And every generous thought disowned.
 Some way he hoped to find, ere long,
 Might reach those hid within these walls,
 Whose shelter he thought bitter wrong.

“ Lord Abbot ! whatsoe'er befalls,
 Blame not the deeds may hence ensue ;
 These deeds have been provoked by you !

XLIII.

With haughty eye and cheek, that burned,
 Straight to the Abbot's hall he turned,
 Bearing the falchion of his foe,
 While vengeance dark sat on his brow.

A parting gesture slight he gave ;
 Stately the Abbot stood and grave,
 Nor sought, by look, or argument,
 To win his passions to relent.
 And, as he drew near to the screen,
 The Abbot's page, with humble mien,
 Brought message brief from Warwick's lord,—
 Required Duke Richard's present word
 On subject high, that might not wait ;—
 The board were sitting in debate.

XLIV.

Straight, Richard to the council went ;
 And thus, in mutual discontent,
 Parted the victor and the sire—
 The victor, with disdainful ire,
 The Abbot, with a meek desire
 To save Fitzharding's threatened life,
 And keep from sacrilegious strife,
 From envious and irreverend search,
 His Abbey-precincts and his Church.
 He sought the Knight ; but still his guard,
 The Saxon door, held sturdy ward.

No voice beyond in gallery
Gave to his friendly call reply ;
And, with a weary sigh, he sought
His cell, though peopled 'twas with thought,
With spectre-cares of many a day,
Still thronging where he silent lay :
There he resolved awhile to lie,
Hoping Fitzharding might be nigh.

XLV.

Wearied and worn with grief and fears,
Vainly he mourned, that at his years
He took the burthen up again
Of Abbey-honours he thought vain,
And had resigned, foreseeing crime
And tumult in this fearful time ;
But, weary of a long repose,
He, whom, his grateful monks re-chose,
Resumed his honours at life's close,
To be the lord and slave of men.
And now was come that evil day,
When the land bore divided sway.

Behold him now, in mitred chair
 Of rule, of honour and of care ;
 Behold his trembling age reclined
 On thorny pillows, brodered o'er
 With pageantries, that ceased to blind
 The vanities of years before ;
 And hear him mourn his comfort lost,
 Wisdom, o'ercome by love of power,
 The peace of age by worldly passion tossed.

XLVI.

Yet kindly conscious was the thought
 That his last toil had not been vain,
 To save from rage, or thirst of gain,
 His Abbey, nigh to ruin brought.
 His care had rescued her from woe,
 And bade her former grandeur glow ;
 Repaired her walls and cloisters grey,
 And o'er them thrown the tinted ray
 (Through windows traced with legend story)
 Of tinted lights of Melancholy ;
 Such as she loves to muse beneath,
 Whether with rose, or cypress wreath,

(Rapture and sadness meek, in emblem there)

When the last, western gleam

Shoots a long, trembling beam

O'er the bold Norman arch and walks afar ;

And Evening's choral hymn, the while,

Swells high, and falls along the aisle.

END OF THE SEVENTH CANTO.

CANTO VIII.

SOLEMN WATCH WITHIN THE ABBEY.

I.

FITZHARDING, when his steps withdrew
(Hard triumph gained!) from Richard's view,
Resolved, while through the gallery's shade
Indignantly and sad he strayed,
To learn at once his father's fate.
Nor the securer hour await ;
And o'er the aisle he bent to see
If there the Monk, his guide, might be.

II.

Changed was the solemn scene below,
Where monks with stillness, to and fro,
Had borne the dead to place of rest,
Or shrived the spirit, while possess

(Though with so transient potency)
 Of frail home of mortality.
 Now from the aisles the crowd was gone :
 By the death-torch, the Watch-monk lone
 Stood dimly o'er the blood-stained bier,
 Seeming some shadowy shape of Fear !
 While that torch, strange, a grisly hue
 O'er the dead warrior's visage threw.
 Now heavy-falling steps around
 No more disturbed the distant ground ;
 The bearers from their toil reposed ;
 The cloister's distant door was closed ;
 From chantry-tomb and chapel nigh
 Was sunk the soothing minstrelsy :
 All in the aisle was hushed in death,
 When Clement ventured from beneath.

III.

He ventured on the secret stair
 To warn Fitzharding to beware ;
 For, 'mong the bands of Richard's host,
 Who round the Abbey-porches lay,
 Short words, o'erheard at whiles and lost,
 Proved, that, they watched Lancastrian prey.

Their enemies, they said, had found
Refuge within the Abbey-bound.
Church-law with taunt of scorn they named ;
Talked of "good sword" and "Churchman tamed."
Their earnestly he urged the Knight
To rest in gallery that night.

IV.

Fitzharding paused not, ere he said,
Too long had he the torture proved
Of hope and fear for those he loved,
To suffer any weightier dread.
Concealed he would no longer stay,
But search where dead or wounded lay.
Then asked he if the Monk had seen
A lifeless warrior-chief borne by
St. Hugo's tomb at dusk of e'en,
When priest sung in his chantry nigh.
But Clément at such hour had slept,
Worn out with vigils he had kept.
The chantry-monk, who requiem sung,
Dwelt in St. Julian's subject-cell ;
And there had duly gone, when rung
That bell's accustomed evening-bell.

V.

Again the Monk Fitzharding warned,
Dangers unseen might not be scorned ;
And there weré brothers in the aisle
Would willingly his steps beguile,
 If a Lancastrian knight they knew ;
But, if he still the worst must dare,
A monkish garmént he would spare,
 Might shade him slightly from their view.
The Baron liked not frock and hood,
 As covering for a spirit brave ;
But fully spoke his gratitude,
 And, farther, did the watchword crave.

VI.

In earnest speech then craved the Knight
The counter-signal for the night.
“ ‘ Peace be on earth ! ’ shall be your guide,
And shield you through this Abbey wide ;
But if, as knight, you rashly show
Your rank,—though cased from top to toe,
You cannot 'scape the secret hate,
That dwells in our divided state.

Duke Richard's soldiers are abroad ;
 And where, Sir Knight, is your good sword ?”

VII.

Fitzharding, as from dream amazed,
 On the disarmed scabbard gazed ;
 And now, of weapon's aid bereft,
 (No other means of safety left)
 He yielded to a proffered guise ;

And o'er his stately harness threw
 The Benedictine draperies

Of ample width and sable hue.
 He doffed the plumage from his brow,
 But kept the casque of steel below ;
 O'er which a monkish cowl was thrown,
 That hid his visage in it's frown.

VIII.

Clement, ere to the aisle he led,
 These parting words of warning said :—
 “ Now mark the way I bid you go,
 And step with prudent care and slow,
 For warrior's step may ill agree
 With cloistered man's tranquillity..

Pass not athwart the nave, I pray,
Though there may lie your shortest way ;
For in the cloister-pier, beside,
Darkling, a watch-monk doth abide ;
Nor pass the choir before the shrine,
For, there the wonted tapers shine,
And watchers in the gallery wait,
And guard that place, with solemn state ;
But by the shrine of Humphrey march,
Then onward, through the eastern arch
That leads behind St. Alban's bier ;
Then through our Lady's Porch, and here
Step quietly, like sandalled man,
Or charnel-monk thy gait will scan.
Our Lady's Shrine go thou not nigh ;
The chantry of St. Blaize pass by.
The ALTAR OF FOUR-WAX LIGHTS shun,
And the East turret's lurking stair ;
The Abbey's northern porch beware.
Without, Duke Richard's soldiers wait—
Our guard, or—as may be—our fate !”

IX.

" Then turn thee on King Offa's aisle,
 Who, from the roof, shall on thee smile ;
 Pause not, nor look, till thou hast gained
 The Transept at the western end,
 Where shrined Amphibalus is laid ;—
 Then, speed thou to the deeper shade.
 But if thy steps are watched, then wend
 Where Michael and St. Patern bend,
 To guard the northern transept's bound ;
 Within a turret-stair is found,
 That leads to thin arched wall, on high,
 Where thou, as here, secure may'st lie.
 So fare thee well ! I bless thy way,
 And will assist thee as I may."
 Ere hasty thanks the Knight could pay,
 Clement upon the aisle looked out ;
 No shape appeared of priest, or scout.
 He signed Fitzharding swift away.

X.

Long watched the Monk, where, on the aisle,
 The Warrior trod in his dark weed ;

Ill might such stalk his rank beguile,
Or figure be for monk's received.
He watched him by Duke Humphrey's tomb,
Where, from the roof's light filagrée,
Blazed tapers through the vaulted gloom,
While voices sung his obsequy.
He watched him through the eastern arch,
Where once St. Catherine's story shone ;—
The Knight has turned on Mary's Porch,—
The monk is to his pallet gone.

XI.

St. Mary's Porch the Knight has turned ;
'Twas well the tomb-lights dimly burned ;
They showed not even the windows tall,
That graced, in fretted state, the wall ;
Nor yet St. Alban's Chapel there,
His arches pointing fine in air,
Of loftiest grace and beauty rare.
Eastward Fitzharding cast his eye,
Beyond St. Mary's portal high,
That showed her in her distant shrine
Of lily and of eglantine ;

Beneath appeared a dismal sight—
 Her altar, hung with sable hue,
 Where yellow tapers ranged to view,
 Shed forth a melancholy light.
 Fitzharding sighed, who, all too well,
 The language of those lights could spell ;
 And that of the faint strain, that rose,
 With voice of soul, from chapel nigh—
 The SEQUENCE for the LAST repose,
 While yet the dead unburied lie !
 In silent thought awhile he stood,
 With folded arms and shading hood,
 And deep moan rent his breast ;
 Then slowly o'er the gloomy ground
 He drew, to catch the nearer sound
 Of " Rest—eternal Rest !"

XII.

Sudden, from forth a darkened nook
 A dreary voice spoke near, " Beware !"
 Then paused, and seemed to say, " Prepare !"
 It might have come from grave forsook,

So strange, so thrilling was the tone.

He looked the way that warning came,

Low lying waved a dark red flame ;

He saw that dusky torch alone,

Until it's lengthening gleam had known,

How thick the new-made graves were strewn

Beyond. He trembled at this sight,

Musing for whom these graves might wait ;

What gallant comrades of the fight,

What friend, what kinsman, here this night

Might come unto his last estate !

The grave all still and patient lay,

As if it knew, though long their stay,

They might not cheat it of its prey.

Sudden, Fitzharding thought, that here

Would rest, perchance, his father's bier !

With horror struck and deep dismay,

He turned him from this scene away.

XIII.

His step called forth that voice unknown ;

It muttered in sepulchral tone,

“ Beware ! the earth is heaped around ;

The graves are opened on this ground ! ”

Sullen and dim a form appeared,
 And the low-lying torch it reared,
 Showing a face to him unknown;
 It reared the torch, and showed its own.
 A form so tall, so spare and gaunt
 Might have been drawn to image Want;
 And well the ghastly face supplied
 The look of one for food had died:
 So livid, pale, so grim, so shrunk,
 The visage of this charnel-monk!
 Ardent and haggard were his eyes,
 And full of evil dark surmise;
 Yet gleamed, at whiles, all fiery red,
 Just where the cowl its darkness shed.
 His figure, draped in weed of woe,
 Did a bossed symbol grimly show,
 Bones and an eyeless head.
 This shape of terror, with no name,
 (While on their wormy verge he stood)
 As home and empire seemed to claim
 The graves, o'er porch and chapel strewed.

XIV.

He held the torch before the Knight ;
And, whether glance of helmet bright
From forth his veiling hood might stray,
Or that the cowl so baffling lay,
It seemed suspicion to excite,
He claimed the watchword of the night.
And when Fitzharding said his say,
And from the porch had passed away,
That Monk stood on King Offa's aisle,
 With folded arms and steps astride,
And watched him with a lowering smile,
 As though he muttered, " Ill betide !"
The gilded spurs, too sure, I ween,
Beneath the Knight's dark skirt were seen.

XV.

Now when Fitzharding reached the end,
 Where Mercian Offa from the vault
 Looked down, and seemed to bid him halt,
He turned a backward glance to send.
The Monk was gone ; but, in his stead,
Ler ned forward from a pillar's shade,
 A gauntlet hand and helmet head ;

WATCH WITHIN THE ABBEY.

Another yet behind stood near,
Who in the gloom might scarce appear,
And cautious gesture made.
Far were they from the guard's last torch,
Just where the Abbey's northern porch
And Mary's Ante-chapel met;
Beyond, Duke Richard's guard was set.

XVI.

Abrupt, then in the shade they drew,
As if to shun Fitzharding's view.
The Baron well bethought him then
Of the Monk Clement's charge :—
“ Pause not, nor turn to look again,
Till you have gained the marge,
Where the north aisle and transept join.”
He judged this charge important sign,
And, instant, passed upon the way,
Where the dread nave and transept lay.
As o'er that scene a glance he gave,
Where every tomb and lowly grave
And altar-slab and dim shrine near,
Was now a warrior's bleeding bier,

He checked his step, lest suddenly
Some face beloved he there might see.

XVII.

He had been in the front of war,
Nor ever feared the deadly scar ;
Had seen his comrades fall beside,
And shrunk not from the battle's tide ;
Intent alone the foe to stem,
He felt not for himself nor them ;
But now, when zeal, nor passion, bore
Their wonted sway his thronged mind o'er ;
When stilly he might see and know
Each written character of woe ;
And view, perchance, some well-known face,
All changed and shrunk from living grace ;
Unconquerable dread arose,
To meet what Death might thus disclose !
The animated look—the eye,
That had so oft, all smilingly,
Dwelt on his with a kindly joy,—
How might he view, now stern and dim,
Bend not one beam of soul on him ;

Nor turn, at sound of step, or voice,
So oft its signal, to rejoice?

XVIII.

Scarce could Fitzharding's limbs sustain
The burden of his shuddering pain ;
He stood, and on a pillar leaned,
While some brief moments intervened.
Brief must they be ; for, even then,
Behold ! far off in Offa's aisle,
With stealthy step, those armoured men,
Whom he well knew for watchful guile.
Mindful then of the turret near,
Pointed by Clement's prudent fear,
He through the northern transept stept,
Where St. Amphibalus long slept.
In passing by that gorgeous shrine,
He to the watch-monks gave the sign—
“ Peace be on earth !” He spake no more ;
But sought that little turret's door
Deep in the angle, where it lay
And shaded from the shrine's strong ray.

XIX.

He stood, and watched, some little space,
On the sad threshold of the place ;—
That circling stair was still in shade,
By thickness of the old wall made.
But, could he gain' the gallery,
The shrine-lights through the tracery,
Darting so high a feeble ray,
Would guide him on the narrow way.
Fitzharding sought that narrow stair,
And trod it's gloomy path with care,
Yet, sometimes, 'gainst the narrow bound
Struck his steeled foot, with startling sound.
His harnessed shoulders broad would graze
The strait walls of these secret ways.
Twice round the newel had he pressed,
When his foot found a level rest.
From high poured forth the midnight air,
Through loop-hole of the turret-stair.
He traced not now the second flight,
For, at short distance on the right,
Faint ray amid the darkness streamed,
And through an arch the gallery gleamed.

XX.

Soon as Fitzharding passed the arch,
He stepped with calm and firmer march,
And backward threw his baffling cowl,
And looked and breathed with freer soul.
But now the narrow gallery
Had nigh his venturous footstep stayed ;
The pillars' base so close did lie,
Scarce might he pass behind their shade.
That course of pillars still is seen
Along the massy wall,
With rude, misshapen arch between
Each pillar short and small.
It fronted then the shrine and tomb
Of him, who shared St. Alban's doom.

XXI.

Here might awhile Fitzharding wait
Till Richard's scouts their watch abate ;
And, from this transept's southern end,
Above the nave itself, might wend
And pass above the western door,
Behind the parapet's high breast ;

Thence glance the long, long vista o'er,
To farthest shrine of MARY blessed,
Seen through the pointed arches near,
That rose above St. Alban's bier.
Thus far the Knight may range, and view
The death-scene many a heart shall rue,
The battle's prey—the mighty slain
Stretched out, and watched on marble plain.
Whence then that gallery might go
Around on high, or deep below ;
Or leading o'er the cloister walk,
Where the unconscious monk may stalk ;
Or to the Abbot's secret room,
Where Richard late decreed his doom ;
Or to the inmost cell, wrought there ;
Or to deep winding fatal stair—
Few living in the Abbey knew.
For, hidden far from searcher's view,
Was many a flight and passage dim
To vaulted hall and chamber grim ;
To crypt and sepulchre and shrine ;
And prison cells, that undermine

The cloister-walk, and seem to spread
 Almost to lowly Ver's old bed.

XXII.

Just where nave, choir, and transept met,
 And Death with splendour was beset,
 Fitzharding stood and looked below
 O'er all the scene of varied woe. ,
 And thus it lay beneath his sight—
 The western aisles were stretched in night,
 Save the shrined transept's rays
 Threw the full splendour of its blaze
 'Thwart the choir-steps and 'slant the nave.
 There, every altar-tomb and grave,
 As that long line of glory fell,
 Showed its dead warrior, all too well.
 Before those steps three altars stood
 Arranged in row—Oswyn's the good,
 St. Thomas, and the sad Marie,
 Now 'reft of pomp and imagery.
 There priests kept solemn watch around
 Three knights, in bleeding armour bound.

XXIII.

The silver censer, burning near,
Sent incense o'er each marble bier ;
And pursuivants, in tabard pride,
Stood mute those warriors beside.
No 'scutcheon blazoned high was there ;
But tattered banners on the air,
Sad witness of their master's fate,
Now, as mute mourners, seemed to wait,
Rose not the stately canopy,
With crowded lights, o'er hearse on high ;
While troops of mourners, watching round,
Might creep to hear the Requiem sound.
Not such the solemn watch held now,
No lofty hearse—no mourners bow ;
Nor blaze of tapers high in air ;
Nor likeness of the dead was there.
The dead, each in his arms arrayed,
Exposed to many an eye was laid,
Forsaken save by heralds vain,
Nor mourned, but in the death-priests' strain.

XXIV.

By presence of the state-watch due,
 The Knight his dead commander knew;
 But, who are those on either hand,
 Censèd and laid out on altars' high?
 Nobles they seem of Henry's band,
 Whose p^oursuivants are watching by.
 Vainly Fitzharding might assay
 To read each visage where it lay,
 Or spell the armour, crest, or shield;
 Their glimmer only was revealed
 By the long slanting ray.

XXV.

The farthest aisles and westward nave,
 Where only gleamed upon a grave
 A watch-torch dim and lone,
 Gave solemn contrast to the choir,
 Which beamed as with celestial fire,
 Like to half-clouded sun.
 From Alban's glorious shrine that light
 Streamed through the chancel's gloomy night;
 For, though the Abbot's prudent care
 Had moved each jewel-rich and rare,

Brought far, as pilgrim-offering,
 By noble knight, or prince, or king,
 Yet, trusting to the love and dread,
 That blessed Alban's shrine o'erspread,
 It's pillars, laid with golden plate,
 Fixed in the pavement, that sustained
 The crystal canopy of state
 And golden bier, firm-set remained ;
 And specious show, with truth that viéd,
 And blazed amid the taper's beams, .
 The pendent lamps and torch-light gleams,
 Was left to soothe the Victor's pride.

XXVI.

That rich and lofty canopy,
 With ever-burning lights crowned high,
 Supported by four golden towers,
 Seemed all within as crystal bowers .
 Branched o'er his coffin laid beneath ;
 So richly spread each dazzling wreath !
 Below the centre arch of three,
 That opened to the chapelry,
 Were scrolled, in silent eloquence,
 Lines from the dread hymn of SEQUENCE,

Where late his golden crown had been ;
 His priests and monks, in band around,
 Watched, patient, o'er the honoured scene,
 And Abbey-knights in armour frowned.

XXVII.

St. Cuthbert's Chapel had not lent
 Its wide screen then to veil the choir,
 Where now it bounds the nave's ascent
 With the carved niche and Gothic spire:
 Nor rose before St. Alban's shrine,
 In lofty state, as now is seen,
 The altar's more elaborate screen ;
 Of fairy-filagree each line,
 Web-work each canopy and cell,
 Where many an imaged saint might dwell :
 Light are the flowery knots, that twine
 Round slender columns, clustered fine.
 That to the fretwork cornice go,
 Where flowers amid the foliage blow,
 And wheaten sheafs and roses spread,
 Spell of the Abbot and the King
 Who raised—to guard St. Alban's bed—
 This rich and glorious offering.

XXVIII.

Not then this beauteous screen appeared
 To hide the bier the pilgrim sought,
 And cause the object of his thought
 To be more tremblingly revered ;
 But veil of silk, or cloth of gold,
 Hung high and broad in sweeping fold,
 On days of chief solemnity.
 There only this night might you see
 A mourning drapery, like a pall,
 With ample grace sweep from the wall,
 In solemn memory of the dead,
 And half conceal the Martyr's bed ;
 And seem, like evening-cloud, to throw
 Its darkness o'er day's gorgeous brow.

XXIX.

Westward, the nave, in deeper night,
 Brought little certain to the sight.
 Yet, where upon its lengthen'd gloom
 Was seen to glare a fixed torch-light,
 There lay a corpse upon a tomb,
 Or on some altar's marble pride ;
 And there a monk sat, close beside.

From one the glittering casque was gone,
 Whose wounds made known his fate.
 And stood, high-plumed, on altar-stone,
 Beside the warrior overthrown,
 As though it mocked his state.
 And many a dead form, from this height,
 Seemed semblance but of marble knight
 Extended in his sculptured weed,
 With ensigns high of daring deed.
 Nay, sometimes, side by side were laid
 The substance and the mimic shade,
 The marble knight and warrior dead :
 Now each alike unconscious lay,
 And which was corpse 'twere hard to say !

XXX.

There might be seen, too, side by side,
 The slayer and the slain.
 Those hostile hands, that shed life's tide,
 Still crimsoned with the stain
 Of either combatant's last blood,
 Now powerless lay, as stone, or wood.
 Mute now the voice, whose piercing sound
 Had sent dismay o'er distant ground,

Whose high command was loved and feared ;
 'Not even its murmur now was heard.

XXXI.

And there, oh, sight of pitious woe !
 Lay gallant sire and son below,
 Who, hand and heart, for Henry's right
 Did, horse by horse, that morning fight.
 And there lay son (oh, thrilling view !)
 And father, who each other sl^ew.
 Forced by the fate of civil strife,
 They struck, unknown, each other's life ;—
 And, as they sunk, no more to rise,
 Each turned on each his dying eyes,
 Wailed the sad deed, and mixed their last dra
 sighs.

LXXXII.

By the north pillars of the nave,
 Four dedicated altars stood ;
 Each bore a victim for the grave,
 And now was stained with noble blood :
 They faced those arches, sharp and tall,
 Where Offa and his beauteous queen,
 And Edward of the saintly mien,

And mitred Lanfranc still are seen,

 'Bending from carved capital,

As watching o'er this mortal scene.

 Now, listen ; for 'tis fearful all—

All, that beneath Fitzharding's eye

Lay, as he watched in gallery.

He saw monks to this spot draw nigh,

And o'er a pallid figure bend,

 And search again, if living breath

 Might linger in such shape of death ;

Then, silently, the limbs extend ;

And—by the glare the torches threw

On the gashed face beneath his view,

Upon St. Scytha's altar laid—

 Saw them the countenance compose,

 O'er the glazed eye the eye-lid close

For ever—ever ! in Death's shade !

And, while he marked that awful sight,

 It seemed, by thrill of sympathy,

As if cold fingers did alight

 Upon his lids, and on them lie.

A horror ran through all his frame ;

But this more painful pang o'ertame—

It seemed to him, that his sight now,
While resting on the form below,
Might view his father laid in death !
With frenzied gaze he sought to know
More certainly the face beneath—
In vain ! The torch's wavering glare
To gallery high, through depth of air,
Showed but a wan, dead visage there.

XXXIII.

In very ecstasy of dread
He turned away his straining eyes ;
When, near him, through the gallery's shade,
Where faint the altar-beams arise,
A face—the phantom of his fear—
It seemed his father's face were here.
A something like a helmet gleamed,
Figure or substance none there seemed
Amid those shadows deep ;
Sad was the look, and ashy pale,
As it would speak some dreadful tale,
Yet must dread secret keep.
Was this a face traced on the eye
From the brain's fiery ecstasy ?

A vision sent to warn him, now,
 That his dead father lay below?
 A trace of soul—a look alone—
 A likeness, but as wrought in stone—
 So fixed, so absent, and so wan,
 Was all that met Fitzharding's sight,
 In glimpse, through shadows of the night ;
 When soft the requiem from afar,
 Breathed blessedness upon the air,
 And at the sound it seemed to fade,
 And vanish in the distant shade.

XXXIV.

Long gazed the Knight where it had been.
 Such look of woe he once had seen
 Dwelling upon his father's mien.
 Long gazed he on the dusky space ;
 Then drew the cowl upon his face,
 And closer folded his dark weed,
 And strove that phantasie to read.
 Then, bending o'er that gallery,
 He sought, once more, the face to see,
 So wan in death, below :

Features came faintly to his eyes ;
 But memory, more than sight, supplies
 His father's reverend brow.

XXXV.

To end, at once, his torturing dread,
 He straight resolved to quit the shade ;
 When, lo ! from forth King Offa's aisle,
 With look and step of cautious guile,
 He marked two armoured men draw near.
 And rest them by that warrior's bier.
 So frowned the helmets he had seen
 From shade of that aisle's pillar lean :
 So bloomed the white-thorn for their crest
 So gleamed the badge upon their breast.
 He knew them for the enemy,
 And guessed they meant him treachery :
 But, wherefore by that bier stood they ?
 Was it a Yorkist there that lay ?

XXXVI.

They bent, and gazed some little space
 Upon the warrior's deathly face.
 Fitzharding watched if they might show
 Gesture of triumph, or of woe.

Steadfast they stood with bended head,
 Nor speech, nor gesture ventured.
 Then did the Baron surely know.
 The warrior had not been their foe.
 A Yorkist thus, it seemed, lay here ;
 And, losing his most pressing fear,
 He judged it prudent now to stay,
 Till passed Duke Richard's scouts away.
 And oft he marked them watch around,
 And draw within the shaded ground.

XXXVII.

In solemn memory of the dead
 Now from the choir the low notes spread
 Of midnight dirge and requiem ;
 And to Fitzharding might they seem
 As hymn of some angelic band,
 Who on those honoured towers might stand
 To guide the spirit from below,
 And soothe with hope the mourner's woe.
 But, hark ! a full and deeper sound
 Now answers from the cloister's bound !
 Soon as that mournful chaunt was heard,
 A gloom o'er all the choir appeared ;

While slowly o'er the high shrine fell
 The foldings of the funeral veil,
 Placed for the warriors' obsequy,
 And dropped, at midnight DRAIGS !

XXXVIII.

Murmuring far, where vaults unclose,
 The melancholy strain arose.
 The gallery where Fitzharding stood
 Fronted that cloister's northern door :
 Not one of heavy carved wood,
 With scroll ill-fancied covered o'er ;
 But that most richly carved and light,
 With slender stems and foliage dight,
 As brodered with true leaf and flower,
 And traced with Gothic pointings tall,
 And canopied with fretwork small.
 Issuing beneath this mitred-arch,
 The fathers held their solemn march ;
 Where the long vista-walk withdrew,
 Their taper lights gave them to view,
 And played upon the vaulted roof,
 And showed each fretted line aloof,

There stood the tabernacled Saint,
 Blessing the porch. Each corbeil quaint
 With it's carved visage, looking down
 On all, who passed the arch below,
 With smile fantastic, or with frown,
 From under helmed, or mitred brow,—
 Was graved in light and shade so strong,
 Where the gleam waving passed along,
 That, as the fleeting shadows roved,
 You would have thought the features moved.

xxxix.

The fathers came with solemn dirge
 And midnight chauntings for the dead ;
 And, as they on the aisle emerge,
 Sudden their lifted tapers shed
 Long gleams upon each altar-bier,
 And showed the warrior resting near.
 Each monk, as to the choir he passed,
 A glance on the dead soldier cast.
 How various was the countenance,
 Thus lighted by the taper's glance !
 But, oh ! that words each line might trace
 Of that appealing look of grace,

(But words may not that glimpse define,)
 Which beamed from many a passing eye
 Of the cowed throng then crowding by—
 The look, that would to Heaven resign
 Each object of its sympathy !

XL.

While the choir-steps the train ascend,
 The silver censers steam on high ;
 On them with frankincense attend
 The Prior and Sub-Prior nigh.
 ("The aged Abbot stood not by.)
 They paused upon the marble bound,
 Where now St. Cuthbert's screen is found,
 And, ranging in half-circle round,
 O'er princely Somerset laid low,
 Their hundred lights, raised high, appear
 A curve of flame, wide round the bier ;
 And they, to organ's solemn flow,
 Sang DIRIGE and PLACEBO.
 Whene'er their mourning voices fell,
 Stern spoke above the sudden knell,
 And then the farthest choir's reply
 Came murmuring till, with finest swell,

The loud notes filled the vaults on high,
 With grand and mournful harmony ;
 And these the words that hymned by.

XLI..

THE CHOIR.

“ IN regions of eternal light,
 Where Truth and Mercy never cease,
 Oh ! may each summoned soul delight,
 And rest ! for ever rest ! in peace !
 I heard a seraph-voice speak nigh,
 And thus, in thrilling sound it said,
 ‘ For ever blessed are the dead,
 Who faithful and repentant die ! ’ ”

After high chorus through the vaulted sphere
 Had slowly sunk around the warrior's bier,
 This strain from monks in demi-chaunt arose,
 With many a solemn pause and touching close.

SUNG ROUND THE BIER.

To THEE I lifted up mine eyes,
 To THEE, upon the mountains throned !
 To THEE, WHO spread the boundless skies,
 And hung them with ~~thy~~ thy worlds around.”

The fathers ceased, and, from the choir again
Swelled o'er the organ this resounding strain.

THE CHOIR.

“ 'Twas mine to hear a seraph-voice,
And thus in thrilling words it said,
' Repentance bids the soul rejoice ;
Repentance 'sanctifies the dead.' ”

The choral sounds sunk tremulously fine,
As closed those solemn words—in hushing sign
Of tender awe—sorrow by faith subdued—
Stillness of spirit—meekest gratitude.
Then the full grandeur of the organs rolled,
Then soft, as if by pious peace controlled,
Low murmured, while the mingled chorus passed
From choir and bier, and calmer sadness cast.

XLII.

While rose this chorus soft and slow,
The Knight, in trance of deepest woe,
Listened till all was still below.
And long, it seemed, that pious strain
Lingered below each vaulted roof,
And died, in murmurs far aloof,
Lulling the first keen sense of pain.

Silent, the watching Warrior grieved ;
Tears dimmed his manly eye,
While the close corslet frequent heaved
With many a deep-drawn sigh.

CANTO IX.

AMONG THE DEAD.

I

Now when the midnight chaunt was o'er,
And through the cloister's mitred door

The monks had passed and gone,
Came a pale vision on that way,
Ill suiting with the morn of May,
Ere long about to dawn.

It came not, like the lark's gay voice,
To waken Nature to rejoice ;
It came to mourn her perished bloom,
Untimely gathered for the tomb,
In summer prime, in wintry age,
The ruddy youth, the silvered sage ;
It came the bitter tear to pour,
The silent ranks of death-t' explore.

II.

Long had that anxious train, apart,
 Watched for this hour with fearful heart ;
 The hour when plunder's toil might end,
 And trembling relative and friend
 By feeble torch-light might discern
 The truth they sought, yet feared, to learn.
 The hour was come ;—and where so late
 The trumpet's thrilling voice spoke fate ;
 And charger's tramp o'er battier-stones,
 And rattling arrows and wild groans
 Fiercely in dreadful chorus rose :—

These, that had troubled the long day,
 This tumult all had died away,
 And left the town in deep repose.
 For, not the watch-word heard afar,
 Nor measured step of guard of war,
 Humming the tune he might not sing,
 While pacing near his captive King,
 Nor feeble wail borne on the air,
 Through lattice-bar, from widowed fair,—
 Not these disturbed the stillness near ;
 They gave it character more drear.

And sometimes Horror's self would fling
 Her death-note from the raven's wing,
 When, from his watch-tower, perched alone,
 With ravening eye and ardent frown,
 Downward he flapped where none was by,
 To quaff the gory channel nigh.

III.

'Twas at this hour of dreary rest,
 Mourners around the Abbey pressed.
 Fitzharding viewed those forms of woe
 Among the slaughtered warriors go ;
 And, with dread sympathy, beheld,
 Of every age from youth to eld,
 Those mourners throw the searching glance
 For friends fled from their mortal trance
 Of fleeting turmoil here below ;
 Friends, who had felt what these feel now,
 Ere their stilled hearts were cold,
 The pang, that friends alone can know,
 And never may be told !

IV.

He marked some rush with frenzied haste ;
 So swift from oier to bier they paced,

It seemed they had not time to know
 The wounded form of friend from foe.
 Yet, where the lawn lay o'er his face,
 Distorted sore by wounds and death,
 There would they pause some little space,
 And shuddering view what slept beneath.
 Others passed on this solemn stone,
 With firmer step and calmer mien,
 With stern fixed brow, where patience lay,
 As if themselves and Misery,
 After long strife for mastery,
 Were old companions on life's way.

v.

But, who is he in sable weeds,
 Whose heart in deepest sorrow bleeds?
 Who o'er yon warrior bends the head,
 Now laid upon his marble bed,
 Near princely Somerset outspread?
 The shading cow! has fallen aside,
 And shows the mourner's martial pride.
 He kneels beside a father's bier;
 While the priest brings the censer near,

Takes from his boy in snowy stole
The golden-plated incense bowl,
And on the burning cypers throws
Myrrh and nard and eastern rose.
The mourner rises from his knee,
Prepared what most he dreads to see ;
He lifts the lawn from off the face ;
The cap of steel has left its place,
 And shows the honoured looks of age,
 Around a visage calm and sage,
Profaned with many a gory trace.

VI.

As bends some sculptured form of woe
Upon the twilight-tomb below,
And may nor sigh nor tear bestow,
Nor any living symptom show,—
So viewed the son his father's bier
Mutely and fixed, without a tear,
While his cheek took the pallid hue
Of the lorn face beneath his view.
That look, reflected on his brain,
Held and possessed him with its pain.

His sinking eyes grew pale and dim,
 Yet still they seemed to gaze on him !
 Cold dew upon his brow prevail,
 Tremours his every nerve assail ;
 Till consciousness and sorrow fail ;
 And stupor dwells on all his soul
 With heavy, terrible control.

VII.

Fitzharding watched one mourner long,
 From bier to bier among the throng,
 Till he paused o'er a warrior dead,
 Disguised by wounds, distorted, dread,
 And mangled so that none could know.
 The helmet was not on his brow,
 Nor shield upon his breast was laid ;
 It rested 'neath the tomb's low shade.
 But from that guardian shield beneath,
 From forth those shadows drear of death,
 Mute and forlorn, a dog crept near.
 No antics spoke his grateful cheer ;
 No short quick bark, no stifled cry
 Pealed, as when step he loved was nigh ,

But by the stranger sad he stood,
And upward looked, in doubting mood.

VIII.

A little spaniel dog was he,
All silver-white his hair,
Save some few spots of red-tawney,
With forehead high and fair.
His lively eyes were hazel bright,
And mild and tender, too,
And full of sympathy's quick light,
Artless and warm and true.
Full often gaily had he run
In sport o'er field and wood,
With his dear lord, round Alban's town,
Now—crimsoned with his blood!
And, all for sport, had sought this day
His master's step afar,
Till, coming where he bleeding lay
Upon his bed of war,
He knew him, through his dead disguise,
And owned him promptly with loud cries;
Then, silent, crouched him by his side,
Faithful the utmost to abide.

And when the monks came 'mong the slain,
 He, with quick paws and angry plain,
 Half bark, half howl, in efforts vain,
 Still tried to guard his long-loved friend
 From stranger's foot, from stranger's hand.
 He saw them bring the gory shroud,

 And bear that helpless friend away ;
 Then, fearless, 'mid the trampling crowd,
 He followed close—lamenting loud ;

 Nor threat, nor blow, his steps could stay,
 Nor fair words his forbearance buy ;

 And now beneath his bleeding bier,

 Though he might shed no mourner's tear,
 He paid him sorrow's obsequy.

IX.

Now, as the stranger turned his view,
 He his lost son's companion knew,
 And then the shield, from which he crept,
 Where he for hours mute watch had kept ;
 Then was the mournful truth made plain ;
 A father could not doubt again :
 He saw his dead son resting here,

And checked no more the bitter tear.
The dog, who late had drooping stood
With fixed and earnest eye,
Soon as the stranger changed his mood
To sorrow's ecstasy,
Owned his dear master's sire in grief,
And sprang, as if to give relief
By sad responsive cry;
And even strove those tears to dry.
That now came rolling by.
Stronger no human tongue could speak,
Soothing and comforting,
Than his, who dried the mourner's cheek,
With tender minist'ring.
The eye, that never tear had shed,
Knew well that sign of woe ;
The heart, that never his pang had,
Could sympathy bestow !

x.

Deem it not trivial that so long
Has paused the solemn funeral song
For tale of poor and humble friend,
Where truth and simple goodness blend ;

Since gratitude, wherever found,
 •Fidelity, sagacious love,
 In whatsoever shape they move,
 Claim praise where griefs abound. .
 And 'mid this scene of mortal fate,
 Of raging passions, pride and hate,
 Oh! soothing,—soothing was the sound
 Of artless love and gratitude!
 Sweet as, in pause of tempest rude,
 The warble of some lonely flute,
 That seems its empire to dispute
 Awhile—but swells, and dies away
 At last, beneath the tempest's sway!
 Thus sweet and sad the memory,
 O! poor and faithful friend, of thee!

XI.

Still round the dead the mourners stray,
 Pause oft, and stoop upon their way,
 Till some known crest, or visage dear
 To changeless grief changed hope and fear.
 Sunk by degrees the moan of woe,
 From those, who claimed the dead below.

Step after step departing fell,
 Paused at the porch, in last farewell,
 Till all is lone by tomb and bier,
 Save that a monk sits shadowy here,
 Or man-at-arms, at interval,
 Havock's and Death's grim sentinel,
 Muttered strange phrase ungenial.
 Now rolled the thunder, that had broke
 O'er distant hills, since curfew spoke ;
 Now the forked lightning, passing by,
 Awake the angel-form on high,
 Beneath the crystal tracery,
 And showed each secret gallery,
 Where, starting back into the night,
 Many a visage shrunk from sight.

VII.

Fitzharding, by the thunder roused,
 Thought of the sufferers still unhoused,
 Chased from their ranks to heath and wood,
 By civil treachery pursued,
 Plundered of arms and harness gear,
 And hiding from the murderers near.

Then came the fear, that there might stray
 His father on the wild heath-way,
 Old and alone, robbed of his arms,
 Listening each step to new alarms ;
 Till, worn by past and present toil,
 He sinks upon the bare, damp soil,
 And, stretched low on earthy bed,
 This tempest mocks his hoary head.
 Then came the fear—ah no, the hope
 Himself might with such evils cope ;
 Then filled his mind this chiefest care—
 That he his father's fate might share !

XIII.

These thoughts awoke impatience high :
 He turned to leave the gallery,
 His father's fate elsewhere to learn.
 Though yet below Duke Richard's train,
 Feigning to guard a warrior slain,
 Guileful and still, wait his return.
 As his eyes o'er the gallery glance,
 Seemed a dim shadow to advance,
 Scarce shaped upon the twilight pale,

'Twas Clement, who, with ready care,
 Came to enjoin him yet beware
 Duke Richard's 'scoufs, on watch below,
 Where, he had secret cause to know,
 They stood to give a dagger blow
 To one, who yet their search had fled—
 Lancastrian knight—so was it said.
 And Clement pointed where, in guile,
 Those men in arms within the gloom,
 Who traced the Baron down the aisle,
 Still lingered near St. Scytha's tomb.

XIV.

Since, then, Fitzharding here must rest,
 He mournfully the Monk addressed—
 "Wilt thou, meanwhile, the aisles explore,
 And make strict search the corpses o'er?
 These are the signs thy search shall lead;
 Mark them, and then away, with speed!
 Tall is my father's form, but age
 Has bent it with a gentle sway,
 Drawn on his visage wrinkles sage,
 And streyn his locks with sil'v'er-grev.

And this the fashion of the steel,
 That may, alas! my sire reveal :
 Plain, plaited steel ; no inlaid gold
 Is graven round each clasping fold ;
 His helmet, all of iron proof,
 Is golden-damasked ; and aloof
 The leopard for his crest is known,
 His visor shows three bars alone ;
 His gilded spurs have motto bossed—
 ‘ Loyal, though Field and Hope be lost.’

xv.

While thus Fitzharding, with a sigh,
 Pictured the warrior's pageantry,
 While each remembered sign he drew
 Savè his sire's image to his view,
 He paused, o'ercome with sudden dread,
 As if he saw his father dead.
 The Monk in listening silence stood,
 With look that spoke his mournful mood,
 And bent his head in meek assent,
 And on his solemn errand went.

Fitzharding from his station viewed
 His friend pass slowly on the aisle,
 Whose steps his anxious eyes pursued,
 Watched every gesture, attitude,
 And pause, however slight, the while.
 The ordered biers he moved among,
 And o'er each corpse inquiring hung.
 As slowly on the forms he dwelt,
 Fitzharding dread impatience felt,
 Mingled with anger and surprise,
 As pause bade new fears arise.
 " Oh ! need he doubt ? a single glance
 Might prove my father's countenance.
 Even now upon his face, perchance,
 He looks ! Ah ! now he seeks the crest,
 And now the shield upon his breast,
 And now the golden spur he spells,
 Still on the motto there he dwells !
 Would that my eyes their light could lend
 Oh ! will these moments never end ?"
 He passes to a farther tomb ;
 Fitzharding felt as saved from doom.

That farther bier too distant lay
 To give his doubts and terrors sway ;
 He sought to calm his troubled mind,
 And wait the truth, with will resigned.

XVII

Though now were gone the mourner-train,
 One weeping form appeared again.
 A figure, wrapt in pilgrim fold,
 Passed as with desperation bold ;
 On as she stopt, went close beside,
 A Monk, as guardian and as guide.
 She glanced on every warrior's face ;
 And, though she passed with frantic pace,
 Yet was there in her gesture grace,
 That gave to sorrow dignity,
 And drew and fixed Fitzharding's eye.
 He sighed to think, that frame so slight
 Must meet affliction's rudest blight :
 That sensibility so keen
 Had dared to rush upon this scene,
 Where nerves, that had sustained the fight,
 Shuddered and shrank, and shunned the sight

“ She seeks, perchance, a husband slain ;
 If found—how may her heart sustain
 The dreadful *frat*h ?” ‘Twas thus he said,
 “ How may she view her husband dead ?”

XVIII.

Struck with a solemn sympathy,
 He groaned, and watched what she might see :
 A softer pity touched his breast
 From contrast, as this stranger's woes,
 And Florence in her home of rest.
 Upon his fancy rose.
 He thought what *her* state might have been,
 Had she been doomed to this dread scene,
 And blessed her in repose.
 Her fears must all aside be cast,
 If safe his messenger had passed.

XIX.

Some likeness in their grace and air,
 On Florence still detained his thought,
 And, as he marked the stranger's care,
 A deeper pity for her wrought.
 She bent upon St. Scythliffe's tomb,
 That lay beneath Fitzharding's eye.

Viewed the dead warrior through the gloom,
 And, reading respite of her doom,
 She looked, in thankfulness, on high :—
 And, as the light beamed o'er her face,
 The Baron could her features trace.
 Upon his mind, like sudden spell,
 Terror and consternation dwell !
 'Tis Florence ! 'tis herself ! his own
 Venturing among the dead alone.

XX.

Short was the spell, that fixed him here :
 Forgotten every danger near,
 Save those, that might her steps await :
 Forgotten even his threatened fate,
 He rushes on the aisle below,
 And clasps that pilgrim form of woe.
 His voice recalls her fleeting sense ;
 She lifts her eyes, but sight is gone !
 Her trembling lips, that would dispense
 Affection, comfort, joy alone,
 Murmur but with a feeble moan.
 Fitzharding called aloud for aid,

Through every danger of the way,
 Even where the watchful foeman may
 Seize on him ~~for~~ his instant prey.

XXI.

The monk attendant, late her guide,
 Warned him of ill, that must betide
 From Richard's bands, these walls between.
 If there Lancastrian were seen.
 Then to the cloister straight he hied,
 And soon his ready zeal supplied
 Such aid as twice recalled her life,
 From joy and sorrow's various strife.
 'Twas he, who found her senseless laid,
 Long since, when she a form surveyed,
 And, having raised the veil of death,
 Had caught the ghastly glimpse beneath,
 Which brought to her half-wildered mind
 The very form she feared to find.

XXII.

Grief may be painted; 'tis of earth:
 But joy, which is of heavenly birth,

Of spirit all—celestial fire—
 May not be known,
 May not be shown,
 Save in the smile its beams inspire.
 Such smile spoke thoughts denied to breath ;
 Such smile on Florence' lips was seen ;
 It lightened o'er this world of death,
 And with its glory veiled the scene !
 She saw alone her husband saved !
 Horror and grief had vanished now ;
 Present and future ill she braved,
 Might but her steps with his steps go.
 She viewed not shape stand watching by,
 With curious and with cruel eye.

XXIII.

How different was Fitzharding's state !
 No joy beamed on his anxious mind ;
 But terrors for his father's fate,
 With fears for Florence now combined.
 Even at that moment, suddenly,
 Might he his father's image see
 Stretched on some marble near !

Ere Florence might be spared such sight,
 Or shrouded from Duke Richard's might.

How might we seek the bier ?

XXIV.

To save her from this scene of dread
 And chance of various ill,
 The cloister gallery he had fled
 Seemed place of refuge still.
 But her sole fear on this sad ground,
 Was loss of him so lately found.
 Prophetic seemed it to her heart—
 If now they part — they ever part !
 All other danger, light as air,
 Claimed not with her a single care.
 Sure of his life, her peace was sure ;
 What need of safe retreat for her ?
 'Twas not in shrouding solitude ;
 Far distant woe might there intrude.
 'Twas even at her husband's side,
 That safety was— what'er betide ;
 For, come the worst, they share it all,
 Together live— together fall.

XXV.

Fitzharding thought not thus:—He dared
Meet woe alone— not woe thus shared.
But, dreading now again to part,
His judgment yielded to his heart ;
He caught the courage of her love ;
What she feared not he thought not of.
Then, while he bade, with tender care,
Florence for dismal sights prepare,
Her only answers were a sigh
And smile of sadness soon passed by.
She drew the dark hood o'er her head,
And followed closely where he led.

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