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THE VASSAL'S LAMENT FOR THE FALLEN TREE.

“ Here (at Brereton in Cheshire) is one thing incredibly strange, but attested, as I myself have heard, by many persons, and commonly believed. Before any heir of this family dies, there are seen in a lake adjoining, the bodies of trees swimming on the water for several days.”—*Camden's Britannia.*

Yes! I have seen the ancient Oak  
On the dark still water cast,  
And it was not fell'd by the woodman's stroke  
Or the rush of the sweeping blast ;  
For the axe might never touch that tree,  
And the air was still as a summer-sea.  
I saw it fall, as falls a chief  
By an arrow in the fight,  
And the old woods shook, to their loftiest leaf,  
At the crashing of its might!  
And the startled deer to their coverts drew,  
And the spray of the lake, like a fountain's, flew!  
'Tis fall'n! but think thou not I weep  
For the forest's pride o'erthrown ;  
An old man's tears lie far too deep  
To be pour'd for this alone!  
But by that sign too well I know  
That a youthful head must soon be low!  
A youthful head, with its shining hair,  
And its quick bright-flashing eye—  
Well may I weep! for the boy is fair,  
Too fair a thing to die!  
But on his brow the mark is set—  
Oh! could *my* life redeem him yet!  
He bounded by me as I gazed  
Alone on the fatal sign,  
And it seem'd like sunshine when he raised  
His joyous glance to mine!  
With a stag's fleet step he bounded by,  
So full of life!—but he must die!  
He must, he must! in that deep dell,  
By that dark water's side,  
'Tis known that ne'er a proud tree fell,  
But an heir of his fathers died!  
And he—there's laughter in his eye,  
Joy in his voice—yet *he* must die!

I've borne him in these arms, that now  
Are nerveless and unstrung,  
And must I see, on that fair brow,  
The dust untimely flung?  
I must!—yon green oak, branch and crest,  
Lies floating on the dark lake's breast!  
The noble boy! how proudly sprung  
The falcon from his hand!  
It seem'd like youth to see *him* young,  
A flower in his father's land!  
But the hour of the knell and the dirge is nigh,  
For the tree hath fall'n, and the flower must die!  
Say not 'tis vain!—I tell thee, some  
Are warn'd by a meteor's light,  
Or a pale bird fitting calls them home,  
Or a voice on the winds by night,  
And they must go!—and he too, he—  
Woe for the fall of the glorious Tree!

F. H.

TROUBADOUR SONGS.

1.

THE warrior cross'd the ocean's foam,  
For the stormy fields of war ;  
The maid was left in a smiling home,  
And a sunny land afar.

*His* voice was heard where javelin-showers  
Pour'd on the steel-clad line ;  
*Her*-step was midst the summer-flowers,  
Her seat beneath the vine.

His shield was cleft, his lance was riven,  
And the red blood stain'd his crest ;  
While she—the gentlest wind of Heaven  
Might scarcely fan her breast.

Yet a thousand arrows pass'd him by,  
And again he cross'd the seas ;  
But she had died, as roses die,  
That perish with a breeze !

As roses die, when the blast is come,  
For all things bright and fair ;—  
There was Death within the smiling home,  
How had Death found her *there* ?

2.

They rear'd no trophy o'er his grave,  
They bade no requiem flow ;  
What left they there, to tell the brave  
That a warrior sleeps below ?

A shiver'd spear, a cloven shield,  
A helm with its white plume torn,  
And a blood-stain'd turf on the fatal field,  
Where a chief to his rest was borne !

He lies not where his fathers sleep,  
But who hath a tomb more proud ?  
For the Syrian wilds his record keep,  
And a banner is his shroud !

F. H.



THE CAVERN OF THE THREE TELLS.

*A Swiss Tradition.*

The three founders of the Helvetic Confederacy are thought to sleep in a cavern near the Lake of Lucerne. The herdsmen call them the Three Tells, and say that they lie there in their antique garb, in quiet slumber; and when Switzerland is in her utmost need, they will awaken and regain the liberties of the land.—*See Quarterly Review*, No. 44.

OH! enter not yon shadowy cave,  
Seek not the bright spars there,  
Though the whispering pines, that o'er it wave,  
With freshness fill the air.  
For there the patriot-three,  
In the garb of old array'd,  
By their native forest-sea \*  
On a rocky couch are laid.

The patriot-three that met of yore,  
Beneath the midnight sky,  
And leagued their hearts on the Grütli shore †  
In the name of Liberty!  
Now silently they sleep  
Amidst the hills they freed,  
But their rest is only deep  
Till their country's hour of need.

They start not at the hunter's call,  
Nor the Lammer-geyer's cry,  
Nor the rush of a sudden torrent's fall,  
Nor the Lauwine thundering by!  
And the Alpine herdsman's lay,  
To a Switzer's heart so dear,  
On the wild wind floats away,  
No more for them to hear.

But when the battle-horn is blown  
Till the Schreckhorn's peaks reply,  
When the Jungfrau's cliffs send back the tone  
Through their eagles' lonely sky;  
When spear-heads light the lakes,  
When trumpets loose the snows,  
When the rushing war-steed shakes  
The glacier's mute repose:

When Uri's beechen-woods wave red  
In the burning hamlet's light,  
Then from the cavern of the dead,  
Shall the Sleepers wake in might!

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\* Forest-sea, the Lake of Lucerne, or *Lake of the Forest-towns*, as the German name implies.

† The Grütli, a meadow on the shore of the Lake of Lucerne, where the founders of the Helvetic Confederacy held their meetings.

With a leap, like Tell's proud leap,\*  
When away the helm he flung,  
And boldly up the steep  
From the flashing billow sprung!

They shall wake beside their forest-sea  
In the ancient garb they wore,  
When they link'd the hands that made us free,  
On the Grütli's moonlight shore;  
And their voices shall be heard,  
And be answer'd with a shout,  
Till the echoing Alps are stirr'd,  
And the signal-fires blaze out!

And the land shall see such deeds again,  
As those of that proud day,  
When Winkelried, on Sempack's plain,  
Through the serried spears made way!  
And when the rocks came down  
On the dark Morgarten dell,  
And the crowned helms † o'erthrown  
Before our fathers fell!

For the Kùhreihen's ‡ notes must never sound  
In a land that wears the chain,  
And the vines on Freedom's holy ground  
Untrampled must remain!  
And the yellow harvests wave,  
For no stranger's hand to reap,  
While within their silent cave  
The Men of Grütli sleep!

F. H.

\* The spot where Tell leaped from the boat of Gessler, is marked by a chapel, and called the *Tellensprung*.

† Crowned helmets, as a distinction of rank, are mentioned in Simond's Switzerland.

‡ Kùhreihen, the celebrated Ranz des Vaches.

TROUBADOUR SONG.

*The Captive Knight.*

'Twas a trumpet's pealing sound !  
And the Knight look'd down from the Paynim's tower,  
And a Christian host, in its pride and power,  
Through the pass beneath him wound.  
Cease awhile, clarion ! clarion wild and shrill,  
Cease ! let them hear the captive's voice,—be still !

" I knew 'twas a trumpet's note !  
And I see my brethren's lances gleam,  
And their pennons wave, by the mountain-stream,  
And their plumes to the glad wind float !  
Cease awhile, clarion ! clarion wild and shrill,  
Cease ! let them hear the captive's voice,—be still !

" I am here, with my heavy chain !  
And I look on a torrent, sweeping by,  
And an eagle, rushing to the sky,  
And a host, to its battle-plain !  
Cease awhile, clarion ! clarion wild and shrill,  
Cease ! let them hear the captive's voice,—be still !

" Must I pine in my fetters here ?  
With the wild wave's foam, and the free bird's flight,  
And the tall spears glancing on my sight,  
And the trumpet in mine ear ?  
Cease awhile, clarion ! clarion wild and shrill,  
Cease ! let them hear the captive's voice,—be still !

" They are gone ! they have all pass'd by !  
They in whose wars I had borne my part,  
They that I loved with a brother's heart,  
They have left me here to die !  
Sound again, clarion ! clarion, pour thy blast !  
Sound ! for the captive's dream of hope is past !"

F. H.



“ AND I TOO IN ARCADIA.”

ARE ye come forth, amidst the leaves and flowers  
With all bright things that wake to sunny hours,  
O youths and virgins of the sylvan vales!  
And doth the soft wind of the summer air,  
Sport with the ringlets of your shining hair?

—*I* too have breath'd Arcadia's joyous gales!

Bear ye fresh wreaths some turf-built shrine to dress,  
Some wood-nymph's altar of the wilderness,

Deep midst the hoary pines and olives dim?  
Go! on your way all flowery perfumes flinging,  
And your full chaunt along the forest singing!

—*My* voice once mingled in Arcadia's hymn!

Haply the woods in golden light are glowing,  
And the vine-branches with their clusters bowing,

And the hills ringing unto flute and song!  
Press the red grape! the ivy garland wear,  
Dance in your vineyards!—*I* too have been there,

*I*, midst Arcadia's fair and festive throng!

If this were all!—but there are other hours  
Than those which pour out sunshine on the bowers,  
And weigh the rich trees down with summer's pride!  
Dance, dance ye on!—but *I* have seen decay,  
Steal, as a shadow, o'er the laughing day—

—Even in Arcadia's lap a rose hath died!

F. H.

THE REVELLERS.

RING, joyous chords!—yet again, again!  
A swifter still, and a wilder strain!  
They are here!—the fair face and the careless heart,  
And stars shall wane ere the mirthful part.  
—But I met a dimly-mournful glance,  
In a sudden turn of the flying dance;  
I heard the tone of a heavy sigh,  
In a pause of the thrilling melody;  
And it is not well that Woe should breathe  
On the bright spring-flowers of the festal wreath;  
—Ye that to Thought or to Grief belong,  
Leave, leave the Hall of Song!

Ring, joyous chords!—but who art *Thou*  
With the shadowy locks o'er thy pale young brow,  
And the world of dreaming gloom that lies  
In the misty depths of thy soft dark eyes?  
—Thou hast loved, fair girl! thou hast loved too well!  
Thou art mourning now o'er a broken spell,  
Thou hast pour'd thy heart's rich treasures forth,  
And art unrepaid for their priceless worth!  
—Mourn on! yet come thou not *here* the while,  
It is but a pain to see thee smile!  
There is not a tone in our songs for thee,  
—Home with thy sorrows flee!

Ring, joyous chords!—yet again, again!  
—But what dost *thou* with the revel's train?  
A silvery voice through the soft air floats,  
But thou hast no part in the gladdening notes;  
There are bright young faces that pass thee by,  
But they fix no glance of thy wandering eye!  
Away! there's a void in thy yearning breast,  
Thou weary man! wilt thou *here* find rest?  
Away! for thy thoughts from the scene have fled,  
And the love of *thy* spirit is with the dead!  
Thou art but more lone midst the sounds of mirth:  
—Back to thy silent hearth!

Ring, joyous chords!—yet again, again!  
A swifter still, and a wilder strain!  
—But *thou*, though a reckless mien be thine,  
And thy cup be crown'd with the foaming wine,  
By the fitful bursts of thy laughter loud,  
By thine eye's quick flash through its troubled cloud,  
I know thee!—it is but the wakeful fear  
Of a haunted bosom, that brings thee here!  
I know thee!—thou fearest the lonely Night,  
With her piercing stars, and her deep wind's might!  
There's a tone in her voice which thou fain wouldst shun,  
For it asks what the secret soul hath done!  
And thou—there's a dark weight on thine—Away!  
—Back to thy home, and pray!

Ring, joyous chords!—yet again, again!  
A swifter still, and a wilder strain!  
And bring new wreaths!—We will banish all  
Save the free in heart, from our festive hall.  
On through the maze of the fleet dance, on!  
—But where are the young and the lovely?—gone!

Where are the brows with the fresh rose crown'd?  
And the floating forms with the bright zone bound?  
And the waving locks and the flying feet,  
That still should be where the mirthful meet?  
—They are gone—they are fled—they are parted all—  
—Alas! the forsaken Hall!

F. H.

THE CRUSADER'S RETURN.

“ Alas! the mother that him bare,  
If she had been in presence there,  
In his wan cheeks and sunburnt hair,  
She had not known her child!”—MARMION.

REST, pilgrim, rest! thou'rt from the Syrian Land,  
Thou'rt from the wild and wondrous East, I know  
By the long-wither'd palm-branch in thy hand,  
And by the darkness of thy sunburnt brow.

Alas! the bright, the beautiful, who part,  
So full of hope, for that far country's bourne!  
Alas! the weary and the sunk in heart,  
And dimm'd in aspect, who like thee return!

Thou'rt faint—stay, rest thee from thy toils at last,  
Through the high chesnuds lightly plays the breeze,  
The stars gleam out, the *Ave* hour is past,  
The sailor's hymn hath died along the seas.  
Thou'rt faint and worn—hear'st thou the fountain, welling  
Midst the grey pillars of yon ruin'd shrine?  
Seest thou the dewy grapes before thee swelling?  
—He that hath left me train'd that loaded vine!

He was a child when thus the bower he wove,  
(Oh! hath a day fled since his childhood's time?)  
That I might sit and hear the sound I love,  
Beneath its shade—the convent's vesper-chime.  
And sit *thou* there!—for he was gentle ever;  
With his glad voice he would have welcomed thee,  
And brought fresh fruits to cool thy parch'd lip's fever—  
—There, in his place thou'rt resting—Where is he?

If I could hear that laughing voice again,  
But once again!—how oft it wanders by,  
In the still hours, like some remember'd strain,  
Troubling the heart with its wild melody!  
Thou hast seen much, tired pilgrim! hast thou seen  
In that far land, the chosen land of yore,  
A youth—my Guido—with the fiery mien,  
And the dark eye of this Italian shore?

The dark, clear, lightning eye!—on heaven and earth  
It smiled—as if man were not dust—it smiled!  
The very air seem'd kindling with his mirth,  
And I—my heart grew young before my child!  
My blessed child!—I had but him—yet he  
Fill'd all my home ev'n with o'erflowing joy,  
Sweet laughter, and wild song, and footstep free—  
—Where is he now?—my pride, my flower, my boy!

His sunny childhood melted from my sight,  
Like a spring dew-drop—then his forehead wore  
A prouder look—his eye a keener light—  
—I knew these woods might be his world no more!  
He loved me—but he left me!—thus they go,  
Whom we have rear'd, watch'd, bless'd, too much adored!  
He heard the trumpet of the Red-Cross blow,  
And bounded from me, with his father's sword!  
Thou weep'st!—I tremble—Thou hast seen the slain  
Pressing a bloody turf—the young and fair,  
With their pale beauty strewing o'er the plain  
Where hosts have met—speak!—answer!—was *he* there?  
Oh! hath his smile departed?—Could the grave  
Shut o'er those bursts of bright and tameless glee?  
—No!—I shall yet behold his dark locks wave—  
That look gives hope—I knew it could not be!  
Still weep'st thou, wanderer?—Some fond mother's glance  
O'er thee, too, brooded in thine early years—  
Think'st thou of her, whose gentle eye, perchance,  
Bathed all thy faded hair in parting tears?  
Speak, for thy tears disturb me!—What art thou?  
Why dost thou hide thy face, yet weeping on?  
Look up!—Oh! is it—that wan cheek and brow!—  
—Is it—alas! yet joy!—my Son, my Son!

F. H.

THE BENDED BOW.

It is supposed that War was anciently proclaimed in Britain, by sending messengers in different directions through the land, each bearing a *bent bow*, and that Peace was in like manner announced by a bow unstrung, and therefore straight.

*See Cambrian Antiquities.*

THERE was heard the sound of a coming foe,  
There was sent through Britain a bended bow,  
And a voice was pour'd on the free winds far,  
As the land rose up at the sign of war.

“ Heard ye not the battle-horn ?  
—Reaper ! leave thy golden corn !  
Leave it for the birds of Heaven,  
Swords must flash, and shields be riven !  
Leave it for the winds to shed—  
Arm ! ere Britain's turf grow red !”

And the reaper arm'd, like a freeman's son,  
And the bended bow and the voice pass'd on.

“ Hunter ! leave the mountain-chase,  
Take the falchion from its place !  
Let the wolf go free to-day,  
Leave him for a nobler prey !  
Let the deer ungalld sweep by—  
Arm thee ! Britain's foes are nigh !”

And the hunter arm'd ere his chase was done,  
And the bended bow and the voice pass'd on.

“ Chieftain ! quit the joyous feast !  
Stay not till the song hath ceased.  
Though the mead be foaming bright,  
Though the fires give ruddy light,  
Leave the hearth, and leave the hall—  
Arm thee ! Britain's foes must fall.”

And the chieftain arm'd, and the horn was blown,  
And the bended bow and the voice pass'd on.

“ Prince ! thy father's deeds are told,  
In the bower and in the hold !  
Where the goatherd's lay is sung,  
Where the minstrel's harp is strung !  
—Foes are on thy native sea—  
Give our bards a tale of thee !”

And the prince came arm'd, like a leader's son,  
And the bended bow and the voice pass'd on.

“ Mother ! stay thou not thy boy !  
He must learn the battle's joy.  
Sister ! bring the sword and spear,  
Give thy brother words of cheer !  
Maiden ! bid thy lover part,  
Britain calls the strong in heart !”

And the bended bow and the voice pass'd on,  
And the bards made song for a battle won.

F. H.