

# Poetry

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by

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THE SPARTAN'S MARCH.

"It was at once a delightful and terrible sight," says Plutarch, "to see them (the Spartans) marching on to the tunes of their flutes, without ever troubling their order, or confounding their ranks; their music leading them into danger with a deliberate hope and assurance, as if some Divinity had sensibly assisted them.

*See Campbell on the Elegiac Poetry of the Greeks.*

'Twas morn upon the Grecian hills,  
Where peasants dress'd the vines,  
There was sunlight on Cithæron's rills,  
Arcadia's rocks and pines.

And brightly through his reeds and  
flowers  
Eurotas wander'd by,  
When a sound arose from Sparta's towers  
Of solemn harmony.

Was it the shepherds' choral strain,  
That hymn'd the forest-god?  
Or the virgins, as to Pallas' fane,  
With their full-ton'd lyres they trod?

But helms were glancing on the stream,  
Spears rang'd in close array,  
And shields flung back its glorious beam  
To the morn of a fearful day!

And the mountain-echoes of the land  
Swell'd through the deep-blue sky,  
While to soft strains mov'd forth a band  
Of men that mov'd to die.

They march'd not with the trumpet's  
blast,  
Nor bade the horn peal out,  
And the laurel-woods, as on they pass'd,  
Rung with no battle shout!

They ask'd no Clarion's voice to fire  
Their souls with an impulse high;  
But the Dorian reed, and the Spartan lyre,  
For the sons of Liberty!

And still sweet flutes their path around  
Sent forth Eolian breath;

They needed not a sterner sound,  
To marshal them for death!

So mov'd they calmly to their field,  
Thence never to return,  
Save bearing back the Spartan shield,  
Or on it proudly borne.

## THE MEETING OF THE BARDS.

WHERE met our bards of old—the glo-  
 rious throng,  
 They of the mountain and the battle-  
 song?  
 They met—oh! not in kingly hall or  
 bower,  
 But where wild Nature girt herself with  
 power!  
 They met—where streams flash'd bright  
 from rocky caves,  
 They met—where woods made moan o'er  
 warrior's graves;  
 And where the torrent's rainbow-spray  
 was cast,  
 And where dark lakes were heaving to  
 the blast,  
 And 'midst the eternal cliffs, whose  
 strength defied  
 The crested Roman, in his hour of pride;  
 And where the Carnedd\*, on its lonely  
 hill,  
 Bore silent record of the mighty still;  
 And where the Druid's ancient Cromlech†  
 frown'd,  
 And the oaks breath'd mysterious mur-  
 murs round.  
 There throng'd th' inspir'd of yore!—on  
 plain or height,  
*In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light,*  
 And, baring unto heaven each noble  
 head,  
 Stood in the circle, where none else might  
 tread.  
 Well might their lays be lofty!—soaring  
 thought,  
 From Nature's presence, tenfold Nature  
 caught!  
 Well might bold Freedom's soul pervade  
 the strains,  
 Which startled eagles from their lone do-  
 mains;  
 And, like a breeze, in chainless rapture  
 went  
 Up thro' the blue, majestic firmament!

Whence came the echoes to those num-  
 bers high?  
 —'Twas from the battle-fields of days  
 gone by!  
 And from the tombs of heroes, laid to rest,  
 With their good swords, upon the moun-  
 tain's breast;  
 And from the watch-towers on the heights  
 of snow,  
 Sever'd, by cloud and storm, from all be-  
 low;

\* Carnedd, the Welsh name for a stone-  
barrow, or cairn.

† Cromlech, a druidical monument or  
altar. The word means, a stone of cov-  
nant.

And the turf-mounds, once girt by ruddy  
spears,  
And the rock-altars of departed years !

Thence, deeply mingling with the tor-  
rent's roar,  
The winds a thousand wild responses  
bore ;  
And the green land, whose every vale and  
glen  
Doth shrine the memory of heroic men,  
On all her hills awakening to rejoice,  
Sent forth proud answers to her children's  
voice !

For us, not ours the festival to hold,  
'Midst the stone-circles, hallow'd thus of  
old ;  
Not where great Nature's majesty and  
might,  
First broke, all-glorious, on our wandering  
sight ;  
Not near the tombs, where sleep our free  
and brave,  
Not by the Mountain Llyn \*, the ocean  
wave ;  
In these late days we meet !—dark Mo-  
na's shore,  
Eryri's † cliffs resound with harps no  
more !

But as the stream, (though time or art  
may turn  
The current, bursting from its cavern'd  
urn,  
To bathe soft vales of pasture and of  
flowers,  
From Alpine glens, or shadowy forest-  
bowers,)  
Alike, in rushing strength or sunny sleep,  
Holds on its course to mingle with the  
deep ;  
Thus, though our paths be chang'd, still  
warm and free,  
Land of the bard ! our spirit flies to thee !  
To thee, our thoughts, our hopes, our  
hearts belong,  
Our dreams are haunted by thy voice of  
song !  
Nor yield our souls one patriot feeling less,  
To the green memory of thy loveliness,  
Than theirs, whose harp-notes peal'd from  
every height,  
*In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light !*

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\* Llyn, a lake or pool.

† Eryri, the Welsh name for Snowdon.