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Prince Robert

A POEM
IN FOUR CANTOS.



William Birdsey Benton

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Prince Robert

A POEM IN
FOUR CANTOS

BY

William Birdsly Benton



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Prince Robert.

A POEM IN FOUR CANTOS.

CANTO ONE.



IS night; and on huge tow'ring hills
No sound is heard save of the rills,
And of the sweet-toned nightingale
That sings amid the bloomy dale;
While, rising o'er the summits gray,
The moon sends down her silver ray.

2 But who is she, yon venturous maid
Seeming in royal garb arrayed,
And wandering 'mong those steeps alone,
Where not one guiding path is shown?
Before her lie wild scenes of dread,
That strong men, even, might fear to tread,
Tho' armed, and clad from crown to heel
With best wrought garb of triple steel;
For there, behold, in days of yore
A mighty troop their pennants bore
At early dawn of summer's day,
Intent on fierce, victorious fray;
Who, ere the sun's all radiant power
Had dried the dew on leaf and flower,
Found all their vaunt was but a breath,
All their reward but sudden death;
And still their bones lie bleaching there,
And often on the mountain air,
Wierd, ghostly voices forth are sent
From hollow skull and huge rock rent;
Whilst, mingled with the crumbling dust,
Swords, shields, and spears and helmets rust.

- 3 Onward she moves in eager quest,
 And not a fear disturbs her breast;
 She nears at length the horrid view,
 With firmest step, nor changed her hue;
 She passes oft 'mid crag and boss,
 And rocks begirt with heavy moss;
 She scans with well erected head
 Each sad condition of the dead,
 Tho' on a quickly rising gale
 Are borne innumerable shriek and wail.
- 4 Thus a true prophetess, whose name
 Had not yet been revealed to fame,
 Took up her varied way and long,
 Thro' lands renowned by minstrel song;
 There circling days had often seen
 Flags wide unfurled of diverse sheen;
 The bravest blood run swiftly gushing
 Adown the steeps in torrents rushing;
 But now no more on rock or wave
 Fell the fierce gleam of battle glaive,
 Nor the shrill sound of bugle-horn
 Proclaimed the near approach of morn;
 All, all forsaken, wild and lone,
 Like a vast world none deigned to own;
 Yet oft her eye could well behold
 Where people dwelt in time of old;
 Glebes strongly walled that once did share
 Some owner's fond, laborious care;
 And soon as thick as morning dew,
 Moss roses and carnations grew,
 And here 'neath stately bowers were set
 Fresh blooming groups of mignonette,
 Mingled with callirhoe and phlox,
 While vines trailed thick o'er shrubs and rocks;
 There grandly stood in fairy dell
 Deep purple fringe and golden bell;
 And down where crystal fountains gushed,
 Hibiscus and althea blushed;
 Then for awhile strown thick around,
 Xeranthemums possess the ground,
 Save that some room they frequent spare
 To shrub or vine of beauty rare;
 At length as in a fairy court

The fairy lily seemed to sport;
 'Mid purple sprays white clusters hung;
 To shelving steeps the trotem clung;
 Along a fair translucent stream,
 The lotus lent a sparkling gleam,
 As from its cups of silver hue,
 'Mid sportive breezes dripped the dew.

- 5 Now as the morn with golden ray
 Began to gladden, bloom and spray,
 Then all at once the changing scene
 Displayed a dense, luxuriant green;
 There o'er thick ferns and woodbines blent,
 Embow'ring oak strong branches sent
 In whose half-dark, majestic shade
 The blithesome squirrel fondly played;
 Here clustering ivys grandly crept
 O'er shrubs 'mid which the owlet slept;
 And soon where mosses fringed the bank
 Of the cool stream, the rock doe drank.
 'Mid such beneath the early day,
 The fair adventuress kept her way,
 'Till through the spacious grove, and then
 Took instant to a mountain glen
 Where from huge cliffs of darkest brown
 The mantling moss hung thickly down;
 And whatsoever sound was heard,
 If some soft breeze a leaflet stirred,
 If whirl or splash of waters clear,
 Or trinkling, fell upon the ear,
 If startled owlet thence withdrew,
 And o'er the craggy summit flew,
 Or if a thrush from leafy spray
 Was pleased to pour his wonted lay,
 It served more strongly to impress
 Upon the soul the mournfulness
 For which that deep, majestic space,
 Seemed fashioned for a dwelling place.
 And now, as she still onward drew,
 The glen fast wider, fairer grew;
 To numerous vines rocks give support,
 And seem the seats of fairy court;
 Wistaria, as with bridal yoke,
 Unites the daphne and the oak;

Down varied steep and narrow dell,
 Peered honeysuckle, rose and bell;
 Sweet hyacinths, with grandest cheer
 Seemed to disport both far and near,
 'Neath varied shade, o'er velvet knoll,
 Or gentle bank, to fondly stroll,
 Or on a fountain's clear expanse
 In mazy rings as fondly dance.
 At length amid a valley wide
 Fair youths and dames her form espied,
 Yet they could not, tho' all intent,
 Descern the course in which she went,
 For as some bird of sparkling plume
 Is seen amid the forest gloom,
 Then speeds so quick the keenest sight
 In vain essays to trace its flight,
 Thus instant did she disappear
 The very moment she drew near.

- 6 Now when above the forest's green,
 The blazing sun was fully seen,
 Prince Robert and his faithful band
 Rode forth amid that mountain land,
 Where had been wrought great deeds of fame;
 And soon unto his mind it came
 How once in days of battle strife
 A mystic maiden saved his life;
 But little surely did he ken
 He ere should meet with her again;
 Yet as to left he duly filed,
 Where all the ground lay strangely wild,
 She stood at distance in advance,
 And well he knew her at a glance;
 Slacking his speed, and all intent,
 He deeply pondered what event
 Or danger now might be at hand;
 Or if near to that rugged strand
 She did abide, and here had drawn
 With sportive step to greet the dawn;
 And as beneath a branching oak,
 He halted, she thus plainly spoke:
 "O worthy prince, here rest thy steed,
 And give thy soul's most earnest heed
 Unto my words, lest sudden death

'Mid yon wild wood stop thy bold breath;
 A friend—ah! no;—a traitor there
 Belays thy path like secret snare;
 Disguised he waits the huge rocks near;
 His clutchant hand holds heavy spear;
 But trust thou well thy brand to wield,
 For Heaven himself shall be thy shield;
 I see thy brand flash o'er the tide;
 I see it pierce the traitor's side;
 I see the traitor wildly reel,
 His grim eye scan the bloody steel;
 He bleeds—he falls;—a groan—a breath;—
 His chill frame quivers;—sinks in death.”
 So spoke the fair mysterious maid,
 Nor for a moment she delayed;
 But instant as a bird of dawn
 Springs upward from the dewey lawn,
 And speeds on its aerial way
 To bloomy bowers or woodlands gay,
 She turned and fled; nor long deferred
 The prince his plan, but onward spurred;
 And having won a bloomy mead,
 Dismounts and leaving there his steed,
 Takes to the wood; and soon his blade
 Is 'gainst the traitor's elbow laid;
 The traitor's lips emit a groan;
 His huge spear falls like heavy stone;
 He turns and with intense affright,
 Ventures these words unto the Knight:
 “Alas! what hath of late prevailed
 That thus by thee I am assailed?
 At early morn I hither came
 In wild pursuit of forest game.”
 The Knight replied: “Thy words might well
 Serve minstrel theme; hence plainly tell
 What noble fairy's skillful hand
 Wrought that disguise so truly grand;
 But trust thou not to longer claim
 Unknown thy purpose, rank and name.”
 The traitor heard, and deeply pressed
 By words so stern his guilt confessed;
 Then sorely pled; but lo, the Knight
 Thus sternly added to the plight:
 “Forsooth; in wolves 'tis very kind

To beg where such great need they find;
 To grow repentant and to own
 Their faults with such religious tone;
 But wert thou now safe on thy plain,
 And I amid this wild-wood slain,
 Then how exultant were thy boast;
 How gaily hadst thou drunk thy toast;
 For here thou didst my path belay
 To take my life; here ends thy play.”
 He spoke, and thro' the traitor's form
 Now trembling like a leaf in storm,
 Impelled as with Achillian hand
 The strongly tempered, heavy brand
 Which, while withdrawn, the blood of guilt
 Did follow to the very hilt;
 But, cleansed within the crystal stream,
 It reassumed its wonted gleam,
 And, dried with mosses from the heath,
 Soon found again its stately sheath.
 Then straightway on the rugged strand,
 The prince rejoined his faithful band;
 And soon a newly wakened breeze
 Came down from 'mong the mountain trees,
 And spread around a rich perfume
 And gently shook each bud and bloom;
 Dense loaded hung the spreading beech,
 With mellow clusters glowed the peach;
 The orange richly did unfold
 Its bridal white and gleaming gold;
 Jasmin and stock, as if intent
 On social joy, where richly blent;
 The moon-flower gleamed like mountain snows,
 Serenely smiled the stately rose;
 All diffident yet all replete,
 The cherianthus found retreat
 By crystal rill or mossy stone,
 And seemed well pleased to dwell alone;
 While brachycomes strove to screen
 Themselves 'mong umbrage dense and green,
 Yet did thereby more plainly show
 Their purple blush and crimson glow;
 And soon beside a stately bower,
 Abrus, well termed the prophet flower,
 Looked gladly forth as if to say,

“I vouch you, Sirs, a pleasant day.”

- 7 Now journeying on they soon attain
 Where once a noted chief was slain;
 He rudely clad in fur of deer,
 And armed with hunter's heavy spear,
 Went boldly forth; but as in view
 Close by a mount he onward drew,
 'Gainst this strong arm there came a stroke,
 Even as the lightning 'gainst an oak;
 His huge spear falls; he turns around,
 And on the fast uprising ground,
 And wielding as with tiger strength,
 A flaming sword of mighty length,
 Stood a young knight of giant size,
 To whom he thus: “Whence this surprise
 So sudden and so rash misplayed
 Upon a friend? I to this shade,
 From the bright fields of bloomy Ayr,
 With venturous step have tracked a bear,”
 To which the Knight: “Thy speech is graced
 With sweet romance; but bad misplaced;
 Spies, ere they seek well guarded ground,
 Should change to shape of cur or hound.”
 He spoke; and straight for speedy flight,
 The chieftain turned; but quick as light
 Shoots thro' thin mist, down came the brand,
 And laid him dead upon the strand.
- 8 Now soon there stood beside the way,
 A cavern huge and darkly gray,
 One well might deem the stately home
 Of princely fairy, sylph or gnome;
 And oft historic minstrels told
 Here long did dwell in days of old,
 A giant Queen most truly fair;
 While on her long, brisk, tawny hair
 Which heavy hung in shaggy maze,
 The lion might with envy gaze.
- 9 Now soon the stream, as if intent
 Upon its choice, to northward bent,
 Where bright genista did unfold
 Its proud display of flamy gold;
 Then all at once both far and near,
 Ismenes and pyrenthrums rear

Their stately heads, and densely show
 A whiteness pure as mountain snow;
 At length a melancholy lawn,
 Around their view was widely drawn;
 O'er darksome shrubs the willow bowed;
 The cypress seemed a weeping cloud;
 Low branching pine stood dark and whist;
 Pale poplar grew a trembling mist;
 Whilst, gleaming clear, a single flower,
 Well fit to grace a royal bower,
 Did serve as by some magic thrill
 To make the scene more mournful still;
 And here the prince remembered well
 The tale a minstrel used to tell,
 How once with anger raging high,
 A Queen condemned a wretch to die!
 For he amid relentless strife,
 Had turned a traitor to her life;
 And while his heart with fear did quake,
 She thus her royal vengeance spake;
 "Thy flesh and bones shall here be put
 To nourish the witch-hazel's root;
 Here oft the greedy fox may tread,
 The lurking panther lay his head;
 Such now the honors thou canst claim
 As fittest tribute to thy fame."
 She spake; and while he shook with fear,
 Plunged thro' his heart the blazing spear.

- 10 Now soon upon the verdant strand,
 A minstrel sat with harp in hand;
 To whom the prince: "Dear child of song,
 Whence art thou come? For surely long
 These varied lands from east to west,
 Have been unsought and unpossessed."
 With deep attent the minstrel eyed
 The noble prince, and thus replied:
 "Not distant from this pensive shade,
 An empire, Sir, is newly laid;
 Its people are as truly mild
 As loveliest flow'ret of the wild;
 Their Queen is all unknown to fame,
 And Helen is her royal name."
 This heard, the prince renewed his way,
 And ere had closed the glowing day,
 Appeared in fairest garb arrayed,
 That noble Queen—the mystic maid.

CANTO TWO.



HAT lovely vale, that varied strand,
Seemed surely of enchanted land;
Fair vines did form full many a bower,
The ground was strewn with diamond
flower;
Chrysanthemum and fern-leaf bent
O'er lotus and acacia blent;
The air was filled with rich perfumes,
The pampass showed its stately plumes;
And every bird of sweetest song
Was pleased its legend to prolong.

2 Now 'neath a broad, refulgent oak
Queen Helen thus to Robert spoke:
"Thou noble Prince; say, wouldst thou see
What from this hour thy life shall be?
Even as yon stream serenely flows
Betwixt its banks of thyme and rose,
So shall thy days still onward run
'Neath nightly shade and circling sun;
For ne'er again thy hand shall wield
Or sword or spear in battle field;
But as yon stream still kindly leads
'Mid balmy groves and flow'ry meads,
So pleasures round thy steps shall throng
With gladdest smile and sweetest song."

3 Now near in view, with look sedate
Upon a rock a minstrel sate;
His harp, to which in former days
He oft' had sung inspiring lays,
Upon a ragged hazel hung,
Which o'er a rill its branches flung;
To him the fair, mysterious Queen
Turned with kind look, and spoke serene:
"Minstrel, canst thou not greatly cheer
Our noble Prince with tones most clear
From thy loved harp which formerly spoke

So oft', but now is seldom woke?"
 She paused, and straight with eager hand
 Well used to measures wild and grand,
 The minstrel from the hazel drew
 The harp which seemed unto the view
 Fashioned in full by rustic skill
 For some rude swain on vale or hill;
 With skillful hand he swept the strings;
 The music seemed to mount on wings;
 And soon with voice serene and strong,
 He thus began heroic song:

- 4 'Twas early morn, and far and near
 Innumerable birds sung loud and clear;
 The rose bestowed its rich perfume,
 The apple trees were all abloom,
 And many a fountain, brook and rill
 Did warble sweet 'mong vale and hill.
- 5 "And soon as o'er the grassy leas,
 Came speeding forth the western breeze,
 Near by a dense and waving wood
 The Princess Cathrina stood;
 But on her stately form she bore
 No princely sign, no royal store;
 You would have deemed her then and there,
 A simple huntress, rude and fair,
 Or some sweet belle that roved the plain,
 And fairest youth might wish to gain.
- 6 "Intent she hears the music swell
 From every grove and every dell,
 And fondly looks on every flower
 And fount and stream and viny bower;
 The queenly rose, the mignonette,
 The jasamin, the violet,
 Bloomed close around, while long each shore,
 The ground appeared so covered o'er,
 'Twere far too great a task to name
 The numerous kinds of blush and flame;
 At length unto her eye appears
 A rustic maiden bathed in tears;
 Rustic, yet seeming truly fair,
 As tho' an angel sure were there;
 Or Venus robed in sylvan guise,

Lone weeping for some vanished prize;
 The Princess fain would give relief,
 And thus she sought the cause of grief:
 'Fair, rustic maid, why dost thou mourn?
 Have friends been from thy bosom torn
 By fate of unrelenting war,
 And sent to battlefields afar,
 Or that deep slumber do they take,
 From which alas they cannot wake,
 Or those in whom thou didst confide
 Have they proved changeful as the tide?'
 The maiden thus: 'Mid battle plain
 My father wears a clanking chain;
 To prison by the victor sent,
 Whose heart most sure cannot relent.'
 With deep attent the Princess eyed
 The mournful form, and thus replied:
 'Thou saddest, loveliest, sweetest rose,
 No longer droop beneath thy woes;
 But trust thou well that 'ere the sun
 His downward journey has begun,
 Thou sure shall hear thy father's tone,
 And in his hand repose thine own.'
 She spoke, and fled; and, as she flew,
 Her feet scarce seemed to touch the dew;
 She whistled, and her saddled steed
 Came bounding from the daisied mead;
 She quickly mounted, and from sight
 Sped like a form of fairy light;
 And 'ere the sun's all-radiant flame
 Had dried the dew, the father came.

- 7 "Time still rolled on; and when at last
 Full many a year was fully past,
 And loudly 'mid his leafy tower
 The owlet hailed the midnight hour,
 Where granite rocks of darkest gray
 Rose high above the dashing spray,
 And its deep shade the cypress lent,
 And o'er the stream the willow bent,
 There came the glad eventful date
 My song to you shall now relate.

"But hark—alas! 'tis but a gale,

Rushing adown the narrow dale;
 Ah, no indeed! 'mid grove and field
 Gleam sword and plume and spear and shield;
 On giant steeds of snowy white,
 As if for fierce and instant fight,
 Come boldly forth a numerous band;
 But who is she who doth command?
 A fairer form was never seen;
 Her royal garb bespeaks her Queen.

9 "At length upon a mountain lawn
 Came dancing forth the twinkling dawn,
 And soon full plainly did appear
 Round many a palace far and near,
 Each fairest, most enchanting flower,
 In bed and knot and arching bower.
 And when among the varied sprays
 The birds awoke their mantin lays,
 It seemed as if both leaf and bloom
 Poured forth rich music and perfume.
 But lo, along yon distant meads,
 Another band—a Princess leads;
 Who soon beside a rivulet,
 With the fair Queen most kindly met;
 Each wore a plume of diamond glow,
 And purely white as mountain snow;
 But their amazement who can tell?
 For lo, they know each other well;
 And thus the one who came by night:
 'Say, art thou prone to love the right?
 And dost thou 'ere with utmost zest,
 The right pursue; the wrong detest?
 Yea, thou art she who 'mid the wild
 Didst greatly bless a maiden child;
 And now that child to woman grown,
 I surely am, and by thee known;
 My nation now asserts her cause,
 And would High Heaven refuse applause?
 Vast armies 'neath thy King's command
 Did rob us of our richest land.
 Intent and calm the Princess eyed
 The noble Queen, and thus replied:
 'But we of late have judged full strong,
 Thy nation sure has suffered wrong;

Each deed in former war pursued,
 Our later councils have reviewed;
 The lands we took we now restore,
 And of our own add many more;
 There is, 'tis true, no earthly power
 That can revive the withered flower,
 Or in its former state present
 The forest by the tempest rent;
 But genial sun and rain and dew
 Will quickly cloth each scene anew,
 And bid again the breezes play,
 'Mong fragrant bloom and leafy spray.'

- 10 "Now while the armies shared the day
 In social talk or social play,
 The Queen and Princess hand in hand
 Went forth upon the bloomy strand;
 And 'long the course they wished to tread
 A pathway sweetly, kindly led;
 Here ivy and Cobea vine
 Fondly embraced the oak and pine;
 There oft by fountain or beneath
 Magnolia shade or violet heath,
 The rose and lily side by side
 Showed fairest look of queenly pride;
 Here 'mid thick shrub and circling green
 Fair floral beds were plainly seen,
 Of every shape from oval bar
 To storied round and triple star;
 There rocks upstood of giant height,
 Begemmed with many a flowret bright,
 Whose dainty roots in crevice found
 Sufficient room and kindly ground;
 And thus the Princess to the Queen:
 'My worthy friend; I truly ween
 Thou wouldst that I to thee unfold
 The tale a harping minstrel told,
 How first this wide, romantic ground
 Was by a venturous maiden found;
 She one fair day too far had strolled,
 And night o'ertook her 'mid the wold;
 And soon beneath a bower she crept
 Near where a full grown panther slept;
 But carefully from thence withdrew,

Then instant long a pathway flew;
 And quickly came where uncontrolled,
 Deep thundering waters tossed and rolled;
 Then all at once with step so fleet
 As scarce appeared the turf to meet,
 She sped like morning's early beam,
 Bounded across the raging stream;
 Then to the right her way she takes
 Thro' mingled blooms and clustered brakes;
 While from thick pine or scanty beech
 Darts oft and shrill the owlet's screech;
 And, leaving these, she soon is led
 To Mount Garlardia's shaggy head
 Whence, looking downward, she surveyed
 Full many a villa, field and shade;
 Then, moving onward, she descends
 To where the crystal Rubus bends,
 Whose winding shore she closely keeps
 'Till where 'neath densely shaded steeps,
 And thro' rock crevices profound,
 Its waters shoot with thunder sound,
 She turns again; and for an hour,
 Save prickly shrubs without a flower,
 No verdure sees; but all is rough
 With stony ridge and vale and bluff;
 At length she came where near a hill
 A fairy sat beside a rill,
 Who, when she saw the lovely maid,
 Arose and thus distinctly said:
 Adventurous one; in vision clear
 I did behold thy coming here;
 And straightway with a princess' care,
 For thy repose a bed prepare
 Within yon deep, sequestered bower
 Where thou canst rest till morning hour;
 Then while beneath the rosy beam
 The sparkling dews begin to gleam,
 We forth will sally 'long a vale
 Where blithesome as a breeze or gale,
 Thy steps can speed until again
 Thou dost behold thy native plain.
 Such words the kindly fairy spoke,
 Then by the hand the maiden took,
 And 'long a path with violets spread,

She quickly to her dwelling led;
Of woven rush each wall was made,
The floor with woven bark o'erlaid;
While the deep roof was varied sheaf
Of broom and husk and fern and leaf;
Here, said the fairy, mayest thou rest,
Nor fear that aught will thee molest;
For sure no beast, however bold,
'Ere ventures near a fairy's hold;
And even the tempest, 'ere one spray
Has felt its anger, turns away.' "

- 11 Now as both harp and voice did pause,
All who had heard spoke loud applause;
The Prince did highest praise unfold,
And gave therewith a purse of gold;
And numerous tongues did well attest
True thanks unto the royal guest.



CANTO THREE.



BY every look and every word
The minstrel's heart was deeply stirred;
For lo he felt the mystic thrill
That kindness can so well instill;
He almost deemed in very truth,
He felt again the glow of youth;
Across his harp his fingers flew
Blithe as the gales that waft the dew;
And while on wings of gladsome flame
The music rose, these measures came:

- 2 "The wise,—the just—What would they deem
The grandest for heroic theme?
He is indeed, exceeding bold,
Who dare attempt the Arctic cold,
And shrewd is he who wins the day,
With no advantage for his play;
- 3 Yet such the world will little note;
Yea, pass him by as if a goat;
But see the despot strong and dread,
With laurels heaped upon his head,
Tho' to his foe he may compare
As doth a tiger to a hare.
- 4 "When trumpets herald armies forth
From east and west, and south and north,
All for the purpose to sustain
Proud, boasting powers in quest of gain,
What difference surely if the work
Be of the Christian or the Turk?
Ask Truth what hope or wisdom lies
In bloody conquest—Truth replies:
The panther in his lordly way
Would to the speedy greyhound say:
'You help me catch that noble hare,
And I will call you Grand Esquire.'

Or rather thus: 'Cain's ruling passion,
Become the world's most haughty fashion.'

- 5 "But if ye will I should prolong
The grandeur of heroic song,
Then listen well while I relate
A warrior's zeal and dreadful fate,
As on a river's western coast
He proudly led his dauntless host,
A harp loud o'er the waters rung
And soon an unseen minstrel sung:
'Speed, mighty warrior, speed thy way,
Around thee shines thy latest day;
When thou hast reached the mountains brown,
Thy troops shall fall like thistle-down;
Thy stately shield shall then be rent,
Thy haughty soul to Hades sent,
And on thy flesh the vulture feed
Amid the vast and bloomy mead;
For strong, indeed, the tempered dart
That waits to pierce thy stubborn heart;
The arm by which it shall be thrown,
Thrice stronger than was 'ere thine own.
But speed thou on, to ruin speed
For swift and dauntless is thy steed;
Speed, mighty warrior, speed thy way,
It is—it is—thy latest day.'
- 6 "The warrior straightway angry grew,
For truly well, indeed, he knew
Full many truths were wont to be
Told in prophetic minstrelcy;
And so he feared his troops, tho' strong,
Would be disheartened by the song.
His pride was sunk in sullen gloom,
Tho' grandly waved his haughty plume
Which sparkled most intensely bright
Amid the morning's rosy light.
- 7 "He journeyed on: and every flower
Seemed to possess a solemn power,
And every song of every bird,
Was as a solemn requiem heard;
But lo, a heart like tempered steel
Will still retain its wonted zeal;

And oft' where dangers thickest rage,
 Will fiercest wrath and fury wage;
 Hence, all alert and all intent,
 This message to his troops he sent:
 'That was a wizard note sublime,
 Sung long ago in olden time,
 And song birds oft' beside a lake
 Do sing it still amid the brake;
 'Tis but even as a breeze or gale
 That fans the mountain, hill or vale?'

- 8 "Such timely message spoke so clear,
 Did falling zeal and courage cheer;
 Like panthers thirsting fierce for blood,
 Like waters of a rushing flood,
 O'er hill and dale and mound and knoll
 The glittering columns seemed to roll;
 But yet the leader's look defined
 Some secret thought within his mind;
 'Twas he knew not the minstrel's lay
 Was surely one of olden day,
 Or if its whole expressed portent
 Was for his own adventure meant;
 When first with all his martial force
 He set upon his present course,
 He had no need of hope, for sure
 He deemed his every plan secure.
- 9 "The sun went down; and where were they
 Who came so proud, so grand, so gay?
 The vulture and the forest beast
 Then gladly found a mighty feast;
 And drank from fountain, rill and flood
 Deep purpled with the martial blood;
 The prowling wolf in glen and dell
 Set loudly up his signal yell;
 While 'mid the shades that densely hung,
 The eagle fed her nested young."

CANTO FOUR.



THE minstrel ceased the battle song,
But did the harps sweet tones prolong;
And when at length to hope and pleasure
He changed the theme and changed the measure,
Fond Echo caught the sounding lay,
And seemed to bear it far away;
The nightingale amid the grove
Did join with it her note of love;
Each leaf and flower displayed to view
A gladder smile and fairer hue;
The brooks a sweeter murmur gave,
The forests did more gladly wave;
The winds that 'mid fair lawn and mead,
As loth to hear of battle deed,
Had only sighed, now all enhanced,
Most sweetly laughed and gaily danced.

- 2 Now when the harp no longer rung,
But on its wonted hazel hung,
Prince Robert spoke: "I truly ween
If but that harp had rung unseen,
I had declared no mortal skill
Gave such sweet tones to vale and hill;
Within my own beloved land,
What time on lake or river strand,
Or in fair hall or bloomy bower,
At balmy eve or morning hour,
I listened to sweet tones of mirth,
I deemed our minstrels best on earth;
But if, O Queen, thy minstrel's skill
It is, which doth so grandly thrill,
Or if it be the harp alone,
The truth to me is sure unknown."
The Queen replied: "I well may claim
Thou sure wouldst know from whence we came
Unto this wild, majestic strand;

Long in a fair, extensive land
 Encircled by the ocean wave,
 Did dwell six nations strong and brave;
 Five vessels 'neath a gentle breeze
 Set forth at dawn upon the seas;
 Nine days in full their snowy sails
 Did fondly catch the sportive gales;
 But on the tenth when they returned,
 No land, alas! could be discerned;
 In long extent from east to west
 Atlanti lay; her shores were dressed
 With fragrant flowers and stately trees
 As ever gladdened gale or breeze;
 Where was she now? Ah! where were they
 Her nations once so strong and gay?
 Where all that beauty, wealth and pride?
 Sunk 'neath the waters deep and wide!
 We little deemed so sad a fate
 Did for such lovely land await.
 What should we do? Where seek a home?
 Where on the billowy waters roam?
 If we were saved by Heaven's high will,
 Would He perchance not save us still?
 For what, for where were we destined?
 Would we or wrath or mercy find?
 Now prayers repentant were bestowed,
 And flooding tears of sorrow flowed;
 But whether these did us avail,
 Or 'twas decreed, there rose a gale
 As blithe as ever mortal knew,
 And o'er the deep our vessels flew.

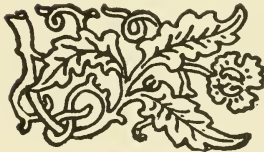
- 3 "Yes, fair indeed, from strand to strand
 Atlanti lay; thrice lovely land;
 Level it was, save gentle hills
 With fountains, forests, brooks and rills;
 'Long bloomy fields where riv'lets led,
 Fair flocks and herds delighted fed;
 How gladsome 'neath the morning dews
 The orchards with their mingled hues,
 And all the sweetly varied bowers
 Where music hailed the welcome hours;
 My home was on as lovely plain
 As ever cheered by dew or rain;

Thro' it unto a crystal bay
 A streamlet took its winding way,
 Upon whose sides fair mansions stood,
 Of marbles built and carven wood;
 'Twas sweet to see by fountains gushing,
 The roses and the lilies blushing.
 O hadst thou sailed beneath its sky
 That land had seemed unto thine eye,
 A paradise 'mid balmy waters,
 For fair Harmonia and her daughters."'
 To which the Prince: "I little thought
 A home so fair might here be sought,
 As thou by fate or chance hast found
 Amid this wild, romantic ground;
 For olden bards were wont to tell
 Of ragged rocks in glen and dell,
 Of stately oaks whose branches gave
 A gloom as solemn as the grave;
 Of dense grown bowers that seemed to weep
 O'er thousands laid in lasting sleep;
 But lo it was of times they sung
 When helmets blazed and bugles rung,
 When clang of sword and spear and shield,
 Did here resound on battle field,
 My people are both strong and bold
 And blessed with mighty wealth of gold;
 In generous deeds they are renowned,
 In every war with victory crowned;
 Well taught to till the grateful soil,
 Well recompensed by daily toil;
 But whence their early fathers came,
 No legends have made known to fame
 Save what in minstrel song is told
 Of forest venture wild and bold;
 And now as flowers of sweetest bloom
 Seemed joyed to give each other room,
 Mingling their fragrance in the air,
 Blushing or smiling pure and fair,
 So may thy people and my own
 Thro' coming years be always known;
 For peaceful thoughts and just employ
 Dispense the highest, holiest joy;
 But why should nations arm for fight?
 Is war alas! their chief delight?

Ah! do not acts of Nature's hand,
 Displayed on sea and on the land,
 Enough of waste and woe reveal
 Without the aid of battle steel?
 Yet peace perverted often will
 Work more by far of deadly ill;
 Hence may we fully comprehend
 How much on rulers does depend.
 Alas! Alas! while yet to view,
 Fair as the summers fairest hue,
 As o'er sweet fields and crystal springs,
 Fortune extends her golden wings,
 How few discern whereto they tread,
 By folly or ambition led;
 Even the most gay, when times grew foul,
 Have envied well the desert owl;
 And many fled from royal hall
 To loneliest haunt and rudest wall;
 Yes, on this swiftly rolling star
 Full many souls there surely are,
 Of every sweetest hope bereft;
 Or if, perchance, there be one left,
 'Tis even as a lonely flower
 Beneath a tempest-shaken bower;
 And as when o'er the spacious heaven
 Fast deepening clouds are quickly driven,
 An opening space admits a beam
 On wood or lake or winding stream,
 Then closes soon, and deeper still
 The darkness falls o'er vale and hill,
 So hope hath for a little while
 Seemed fast returning with a smile,
 So all at once was snatched from sight,
 By fiercest terror and affright.
 Ambition's proud relentless boast,
 Even in the days it glories most,
 Is often like yon slender stem
 Which scarce retains its vernal gem."

- 4 Our story now is justly told;
 And long and far our steps have strolled
 Thro' various lands, and much have seen
 Of bloomy field and forest green;
 And 'neath the evening's pensive hour,

I leave the harp within its bower;
O ye who chance by night or day
To read my wild, romatic lay,
May no unfriendly change or fate
Within the future you await;
May all your daily hopes be pure,
Your every blessing rest secure;
The shadows fall o'er hill and dell;
I bid you all a kind farewell.





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