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CHELCHED

AND

Other Poems

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# CHELCHED :

OR,

Chelsea, Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern.

A POEM

BY

WILLIAM WEBBE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE POET'S DEATH," "THE CHELSEA PENSIONERS," &c.

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PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR  
BY S. A. MOWELS, 138, SLOANE STREET, S.W.

MDCCCLXXIX.

LOAN STACK

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## P R E F A C E .

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It is natural that we should feel more interested in the prosperity of the place with which we are most intimately acquainted than with any other.

The persons by whom we are surrounded—those who are governed by the same laws, who speak the same language, and whose customs and habits of life are identical with our own—must necessarily interest us more than those living at a distance from us under contrary conditions of existence. The love of country has always been considered a virtue of the first magnitude, and one of our poets, in some well-known lines, denounces him who is destitute of it, in no measured terms. But this attachment to a particular locality does not exclude a more extended love : it is only the first step towards that love with which we ought to

regard all God's creatures. The working of this principle has been beautifully expressed by Pope :—

“ God loves from whole to parts, but human soul  
Must rise from individual to the whole ;  
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake ;  
The centre moved a circle straight succeeds,  
Another still and still another spreads ;  
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace ;  
His country next, and next all human race ;  
Wide, and more wide, the o'erflowings of the mind,  
Takes every creature in of every kind :  
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,  
And heaven beholds its image in his breast.”

The intense love of country which was displayed by the citizens of the great Roman empire may have been one of the causes of its wonderful expansion. This principle was exhibited in their history in numberless instances : some, perhaps, legendary, but all showing the powerful influence which it had upon their minds. The lives of the citizens illustrated it, and the writings of historians and poets celebrated it.

It seems to have been reserved for the present age to produce those philanthropists who endeavour to reverse the process, to begin by loving all mankind in general, before they have learned to love any of the



units of which the whole amount is composed. The love of such persons being so widely diffused, can necessarily possess but little strength ; the stream of their affections being spread over so large a surface must be very shallow. However that may be, we have taken the natural order by writing in praise of our native place, and hope that our pleasing task will gain the approbation of those who, like ourselves, hold Chelsea in loving remembrance as the place of their birth.

I beg respectfully to return my hearty thanks to those who have assisted me by becoming subscribers, especially to those who have exerted themselves to procure other subscribers.

Those of my old pupils who are among the number deserve special notice. I pray that the blessing of God may be upon them through their future lives, that prosperity may attend their undertakings, that they may be useful and honourable members of society, happy in themselves and families, and an honour to their instructors. I will now take an affectionate leave of them with the hope that (while viewing with special interest their native place) they

will not stop there, but will pass on to the next step, and (in the same spirit as that which actuated him who wrote "*Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori*") regard that great nation of which they form a part, with peculiar affection, and say from the heart, "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still."



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# Chelched

(Ancient Chelsea).

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## AN ANGLO-SAXON VILLAGE.

(A Picture :—temp. 1066.)

---

Some rude built huts lay scattered by the side  
Of Britain's noblest river,—at the door  
Of one a Saxon mother sat, and watched  
A little fair-haired, blue-eyed child, that played  
Before the cottage door, with all the glee  
Of happy childhood, which has not a thought  
Beyond the present,—for its sunlit sky  
No cloud obscures,—the past brings no regret,  
The future brings no fears.

                    'Twas towards the hour  
Of eve,—a single bird its vesper lay  
Was warbling sweetly from a neighbouring tree :  
Some swans were slowly passing up the stream  
With smooth and regal motion, towards their home

Among the reeds, that clothed the farther shore,  
Leaving behind a glittering track of light.

The tide was of unwonted height that day :—  
The lowlands opposite submerged, (stretching  
As far as eye could reach) appeared a lake  
Of size immense, while (on the surface spread)  
The rich enchantment of the setting sun  
Gave splendour none could paint. More westward  
still

The village church and rectory appeared,  
Close to the shore, reflected in the waves,  
Which gently flowed, illumed with crimson light.  
The woods that stretched far from the river brink  
Glowed in the magic hues. The straggling rays  
Which slanting fell upon the porcine herd  
That fed beneath the boughs, lent to their eyes  
(Reddened by the light) a savage lustre.

Round Chelched's village, Art, as yet, had not  
Fair Nature's works defaced :—there beauty smiled,  
Almost primeval, that fair Autumn eve.

The rustic labours of the day were o'er,  
And homeward, now, the weary swains repair  
With sharpened appetites, from honest toil

Acquired, to share their evening meal, and then  
To sleep the sound and dreamless sleep, reserved  
For weary labour and heaven-bless'd content.  
The humble inmates of that village felt  
In their calm lives, monotonous, retired,  
But rarely change ;—and yet in one short year  
Three kings had ruled in England. In that year  
The saintly Edward to his splendid tomb  
At Westminster was borne ;—his corpse the first,  
Within those hallowed walls he built, to find  
Its rest ;—there shrined in honour to remain  
For countless ages :—the dauntless Harold, then  
(The latest Saxon monarch) filled the throne,  
Until at Hastings' field he lost both crown  
And life ;—and then the Norman conqueror came  
(A feudal sovereign), who o'er vassals reigned,  
Whose iron rule the conquered Saxons crushed :  
But to this little peaceful village came  
No spoiler,—all kept its wonted order :—  
The seasons came, and passed,—the seeds were sown,  
The harvests gathered,—the herds were pastured ;  
The woods each year gave fuel for the fires  
Which warmed the huts in Winter, and upon

The mellow walls made dancing shadows play.  
 None of the little number were withdrawn  
 From rustic labours, to defend their land  
 From traitorous violence or invading force :—  
 Their Sunday duties, and their week-day toil  
 Alternate claimed their care. The festivals  
 Alone made pulses beat more rapidly ;—  
 When Easter, Whitsun, Christmastide returned,  
 Then new attire was worn ;—both young and old  
 In hearty, harmless merriment indulged :—  
 With joyful shouts the Yule log on the hearth  
 Was placed, and when it blazed, and crackling, sparks  
 Cast forth, within the grateful warmth, circling,  
 They told their tales, and quaffed their cups of ale.

Such were the scenes beheld in olden time  
 In Chelched's village,—such were those who passed  
 Their simple lives within its woods and fields.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Saxon mother seated at the door  
 Of her rude cottage, that had watched her child,  
 While glowing sunset melted into eve,  
 Now hears her husband's footsteps, and within  
 Hastes to prepare the welcome evening meal.



## Mediæval Chelsea.

---

### THE VILLAGE OF PALACES.

---

Pass we on :—the quiet village Chelched,  
(Almost unknown, obscurely happy), now  
Has changed its name to Chelsey :—its hovels,  
And their unlettered inmates too, have passed  
Away ;—and in their place, ambitious, stand  
In startling contrast now, mansions costly,  
Many chambered, elegant, adorned with all  
Of rare, and beautiful, the age can bring,  
Which courtiers, heroes, sages, the noblest born  
Have made their chosen home. Even royalty  
Itself hither retired, that here, apart,  
It might enjoy, unbent, the magic charm  
Of converse unrestrained, free from the chains  
Of etiquette,—and from state trappings loosed,  
At ease it might disport. As in the field

The noble horse when its day's work is o'er,  
Unreined, uncurbed, unharnessed, gambols free.

So many stately edifices stand

Within this once mean village, that 'tis called  
In lofty style "Village of Palaces."

The despot king whose will few dared to thwart

Here built a palace, and here his subject

Faithful, loyal, illustrious,—Thomas More,

Oft met his sovereign, to share his friendship

Fatal, and to receive his false caress :—

Elizabeth, his daughter,—Virgin Queen,

Renowned, lived here, obscure, till she was called

To fill the throne ;—to guide with fearless hand

The vessel of the State, that under her

England might grow in years, to be the first

Amongst the nations, great in arts and arms :

Here Anne of Cleves, his wife rejected, lived,

Too wise to grieve for loss of dignity,

Which daily risk involved, and loss of life,—

Dangers from which a humbler lot was free ;—

Here Catherine Parr retired, when death released

Her, from her tyrant lord, no more to be

The prey to his suspicion undeserved,

Or, that caprice, which on the smallest base  
Could build a deadly charge of treason,  
'Gainst which even Innocence might plead in vain ;  
(For oft before a venial court such charge,  
Alas ! had proved a passport to the block : )  
And many more whose names in History's page  
Enshrined are found, have made their sojourn here.  
Brave Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who won fame  
With Edward's son at Poitiers and Crescy :—  
Berkeley made Earl Marshal by the Sovereign,  
First of Tudor's line, who upon the field  
Was crowned at Bosworth ;—Sir Reginald Bray,  
The first to hail his leader King, who placed  
Upon the brow of Henry, Richard's crown,  
Which had been worn in battle, and was found  
After his death lodged in a hawthorn bush :—  
Manchester, selected by his peers to bear  
Their gratulations to the Second Charles,  
On his return from exile to the throne :—  
Shrewsbury, Lord Steward, who with his king  
Went to that Field renowned, at Guisnes,—“the Field  
Of Cloth of Gold,” in which the nobles sought  
With lavish cost, each other to outvie,

And in the attempt wrecked many a fortune ;—  
The Countess who built palatial Chatsworth,  
Oldcoates and Hardwick, and transmitted them  
Entire (a noble mother's gift, princely,  
Unequalled) to her son, and thus the house  
Of Cavendish enriched, with dignity  
To bear the honours of a ducal crown :—  
Northumberland, whose mad ambition cost  
His life :—his Duchess who within the church  
Lies buried, where her monument remains ;—  
Nottingham, who in Elizabethan times  
Lived in the manor house ;—and Hamilton,  
Who the same year that stern Rebellion brought  
His master to the block, loyal and brave,  
Was taken, fighting for the Crown and slain.  
Thus then in mediæval times Chelsey  
Was honoured ;—here those by birth illustrious,  
By merit, and by rank, from courtly fêtes  
Retired awhile, to pass an interval  
Of happiness in polished rural life,  
And there find peace, elsewhere oft sought in vain.

As from a humble, wayside plant, sometimes  
By culture's hand, is born a noble flower,

So from a few small huts, sprung up at length,  
This village of luxurious palaces :—  
And thus it long continued in honour,  
Till wonder-working Time, another change  
Wrought in its fortunes, and its escutcheon  
Painted with fresher, broader quarterings.

## Modern Chelsea.

---

Another era now begins its course,  
Whence modern Chelsea dates its birth,—  
When Sloane retired to spend the latest years  
That crowned a life useful, laborious,  
Honoured, within its bounds. Here he lived long  
And reached a patriarchal age. Here he  
Arranged at leisure, calm and dignified,  
Those treasures which by his assiduous hands,  
In foreign climes, reckless of toil or cost,  
Had been collected ;—those which to the state  
In a few years, he gave on generous terms,  
That formed a nucleus, round which both Art  
And Nature ranged their richest, rarest stores  
Of every kind, both modern and antique,  
Until that Institution stood complete,  
The Country's pride, priceless and unrivalled.  
This is the noble monument of Sloane

Which Time cannot destroy, nor storms decay.  
His churchyard tomb will crumble into dust,  
(E'en though of late by reverent hands restored),  
But bequests such as this, with that twin gift,—  
The garden filled with rare exotic plants,—  
Are living tributes, that, defying Time,  
True to their trust, will keep his memory green,  
Though sculptured stone be levelled with the ground.

From small beginnings little Chelched rose  
In population, riches, influence,  
Till she attained a height that almost gave  
To her the right to claim a civic crown.  
But ere this high position she assumed,  
An interval of dulness and neglect  
Was hers, when builders, sordid and grasping,  
Raised streets of squalid houses, that became  
In time, a pest and eyesore. But, again,  
From her humiliation she arose ;  
Her slumber over, she began to cast  
Aside those rags with which she had been clothed  
While sleeping, and to urge her claim again  
To honour and distinction,—founded now  
Upon a broader basis than before,

With safeguards, such that no unworthy hand  
Henceforth, would have the power to make her name  
Awhile a byword, and a jest.

Though now

No fields are seen, for houses now supply  
Their places,—though the remorseless axe has done  
Its work on hedge and tree,—though shady lane  
And field-path now, no more can lure away  
From home the willing feet, nor tempt the hand  
To rifle hedge-rows, with wild flowers fragrant,  
Or pluck the luscious briar, convolvulus  
Or honeysuckle sweet, or (bent with dew  
At morn) the daisy crimson-lipped, or seek  
On mossy banks, the modest violet :—  
Though pleasant green retreats, where age  
After a life of useful toil, might rest,  
And in the neat and cherished garden, find  
Fit occupation, now are seen no more ;—  
Though miles of dusty roads, treeless and shadeless  
Flanked by long rows of houses in their place,  
Supply alone the paths of modern times,  
'Tis idle to complain ; the law of change  
That works elsewhere, works here ; it gives and takes :



If Time inexorable takes away  
Her rural beauties and delights, she gives  
Something substantial in return, before  
Denied,—a moral power, which only wealth,  
Intelligence, and population, all  
Combined, could e'er command :—he takes away  
Her flowery wreath, and gives a golden crown  
The knight in armour clad, scorned counting-house,  
Or warehouse :—his dignity would suffer  
By the grasp of aught save dagger, battle-axe  
Or sword :—'tis not so now, for gartered knights,  
In coronet and ermine richly clad,  
Complacent view the riches commerce brings,  
And long to share its profits. One of them  
Of late consigned his son to trade pursuits,  
And felt it no disgrace. Thus in Chelsea  
Trade was ignored in olden times ; but now  
It brings no sneering word ;—now its marts  
Are filled with rare, and costly merchandize,  
And offer to the cultivated eye  
A feast :—treasures of art are there displayed  
Of workmanship most exquisite ;—there forms  
Of wondrous grace in things of common life,

To charm the most fastidious, are seen.  
 Marks of improvement shew on every side ;—  
 Chelsea lags not now in public spirit  
 Behind her neighbours, while still cling round her  
 The memories of the past,—of chivalry,  
 And tournaments, when ladies gave the prize  
 To brave and peerless knighthood.

Chelsea stands

Distinguished too by institutions dear  
 To patriot hearts ;—its College and Asylum.  
 In one the pleased spectator may behold  
 Old England's brave defenders, in their age  
 Reposing on their laurels :—peaceful there,  
 Within that noble home,—their Country's gift,  
 Where all conducing to a happy life,  
 (Religious solace,—pleasure innocent,—  
 And employ that makes the hours pass swiftly  
 And pleasantly along) are theirs till death.  
 Here are pleasure grounds for recreation,—  
 Garden plots for willing hands to till ;—  
 A library, infirmary, and chapel ;  
 The latter hung with trophies that recal  
 Heroic deeds of yore, on fields manured

With blood, when faithful hands in triumph waved  
 Old England's banner o'er the conquered foe,—  
 Rekindling fire, in eyes grown dim with age.

Age with penury mated, comfortless,  
 And friendless ;—seems sunless and despairing,—  
 Awaiting in mute apathy, its exit  
 From an unsympathetic world ; but here  
 Old age is blest : with every want supplied,  
 With every comfort crowned.

The Asylum, too,

Its younger sister, holds an honoured place  
 In memory. Here the soldier's orphan  
 Finds a happy home ;—each element required  
 To form a useful life, is here supplied.  
 Its royal founder speculated well,  
 For it has brought, and still is bringing now  
 A rich return to him, from grateful hearts  
 Of blessings :—thus he earned most worthily  
 The title that he bore,—“The Soldier's Friend.”

The Chelsea of our days presents a scene  
 Far different from the past. Mark the river,  
 Which for uncounted years in solitude  
 Rolled grandly on ; then no vessels laden

With the rich produce of the mine or field  
Were borne upon its tide ;—no swelling sails  
Of pleasure craft, with happy crews aboard,  
Were wafted by the breeze, made musical  
With merriment. Upon its banks, lonely  
And unprotected, a few huts alone  
Rose on the shore to tell that human kind,  
'Mid the seclusion here, still claimed a place,  
And exercised its power undoubted, o'er  
All the inferior creatures. But now we see  
Vessels of all kinds, innumerable,  
Upon its surface ; while upon its banks  
Mansions and wharfs are found. No longer now  
Benighted travellers fear the treacherous shore,  
As in the Stuart's reign, for on it now  
(No more unfenced and unprotected left)  
The Embankment vast, its head majestic lifts,  
Crowned by the river wall,—the flood below  
Defying, even when swelled by wintry rains :—  
It chafes and spurns confinement, but submits.  
No fear of overflow now breaks the rest  
Of those who slumber near. Upon its brow  
Inscribed might stand—“For Beauty and Defence ;”

For it adorns the shore that it protects.

How few the inhabitants of Chelched were  
When Domesday Book was writ :--at first one Church,  
A building small and mean, served for her need ;  
Now scores would be required, if to the Church,  
Her teeming population all repaired  
On Sunday morn, to pay with reverent mien,  
Their weekly homage to the King of Heaven.

Chelsea, though once a cipher in the state,  
Now in the Senate proudly takes her seat,  
And by her members, speaks and votes on all  
Pertaining to the welfare of the realm,  
And gives her counsel both in peace and war.  
Endued with lofty principles,—with hands  
Pure from all venial stains, degrading ;—  
Standing aloof with haughty scorn, from all  
That interferes with conscience or with right,  
May she thus keep, and exercise the trust  
She holds, in honour, to the end of time.

'Twere vain to tell the inhabitants of note  
In modern Chelsea, illustrious in art,  
Science, or letters, for they are legion,  
But there are some apart from those ; who have

Upon our notice more peculiar claims,—  
Cheyné, Sloane, Holland, and Cadogan stand,  
Names linked to Chelsea, with domestic ties  
That never can be broken (household words)  
Reminding us of those who helped to make  
Her what she is, and which shall still be heard  
In future years, when we have passed away.  
Even Cadogan's noble house, again  
Has made its home in Chelsea, and its head  
(Manorial lord) has now his rightful place :  
Nor was his local influence long unfelt,  
Houses enlarged and beautified,—pathways  
Old and worn, remade ;—all seemed to brighten  
Under some genial power, before unfelt ;—  
And here long may he live the fragrant life  
Of goodness,—to be the central point  
Whence emanates the glow of happiness  
To all his hand beneficent can aid,—  
Even as the rose which in an atmosphere  
With perfume fraught (its own sweet breathing) dwells.

Whatever changes may be wrought by Time  
In future years, within our island home  
Chelsea richly dowered, possessing now

Both population and intelligence,  
With rank and wealth, to give her utterance weight,  
Has now the power, with others joined, to check  
The democratic lawlessness, which seemed  
At once to threaten, in its blind career,  
Not only the hurtful and superfluous  
To destroy, but also to o'erturn what age  
Had stamped as sacred, and experience wise.

And now, dear native place, my hand has traced  
Thy course from the beginning, small indeed  
Like the first life-gush of a noble stream ;  
And like it as it still flows on,  
By tributaries swelled, until it gains  
A volume that would bear the proudest ship  
In safety on its breast.

Before thee now  
A path illustrious opens, tread firm  
And fearless ;—keep the narrow way and win  
Fame for thyself, and to thy Country bring  
Reflected lustre, whilst thou giv'st it aid.

SPES ET FIDES INFRACTA.

Heb. iii. 17, 18.—Job. xiii. 15.

---

A man went out one summer's morn  
To sail on the sunny sea,—  
His eye was bright, and his heart was glad,  
As joyously floated he.

He marked the splendour of the sky  
With light unspeakable blest,  
And (as clothed in a robe undefiled)  
With glory resplendently drest.

And as he viewed the wide expanse  
Of the wavelets dancing bright,  
And breathed the unpolluted air  
In a frame of holy delight,

He felt in his heart enkindle  
A love that floods could not chill,  
That unquenchable, like the Greek fire,  
No power could darken or kill.



And his voice in exultant strains  
Rose high as he vaulted along,  
While "Gloria Deo in excelsis"  
Pealed forth like an angel's song.

"I love Thee, my God, for the power  
Thy lovely earth to behold,  
When in majesty waves over all  
The banner of beauty unrolled.

The sun in its glorious splendour,  
Baptizing the land and the sea  
In its dazzling effulgence, presents  
A type most worthy of Thee.

And as all enraptured I gaze,  
My heart is fain to confess  
The magnificent works of Thy hands  
No words can ever express.

In rapt adoration I bend  
To Thee, the Author Divine  
Of the heavens, and the earth, and above  
Of the orbs unnumbered that shine."

And so he rejoiced as he went  
 On his bright and happy career,—  
 There was sunshine without, while within  
 No haunting spectres appear.

\* \* \* \* \*

But over the scene comes a change,—  
 The waves no longer at play  
 In the sunshine, like lambkins, seem now  
 Like wolves expecting their prey.

Dark ominous clouds overspread  
 The sky, like a funeral pall,  
 And in place of enchantment, there lies  
 The shadow of Death over all.

No warm gentle zephyr impels  
 His bark, it now rushes along,—  
 But “Gloria in excelsis” still  
 Is the burden of his song.

The hurricane wind that has driven  
 The waves to mountainous heaps,—  
 Wild, mighty, resistless, and grand,  
 To the far horizon sweeps.

The dark waves were his cathedral walls,  
Lit up with the lightning's flash,  
And for accompaniment he had  
The loud rolling thunder's crash.

Now mingling with the mighty din,  
As with maddening swiftness driven  
Again the "Gloria" swelled,—then ceased,—  
His song was finished in heaven.

ON HEARING THE BELL TOLLING AT THE  
ABBEY OF ST. ALBAN'S.

---

The Abbey bell is speaking  
With the voice of other times,  
And the summer silence breaking  
With its slow, sad, solemn chimes.

I list with a dreamy languor  
As the sound goes booming by,—  
That olden, ghost-like clangour,  
Which dies in a wailing sigh ;—

The fitful cadence falling  
On the incense-laden air,  
Of scenes long past is telling,  
And of quaint forms wandering there,—

Of monks who were sweetly chanting  
Their vespers at close of day,  
As the red rays came slanting  
On those antique walls of grey ;—

Of those in by-gone ages,  
Who with ready fingers skilled,  
The missals illumined pages  
With marvellous beauty filled,—

Of those who in ancient meadows,  
In gardens and orchards were seen,  
While (as now) the clouds' soft shadows  
Moved over the sunlit green.

The weary waves come sweeping  
In the sultry summer tide,  
Like the dirge of mourners weeping  
For a lost one by their side.

The bright earth, overcasting  
With their melancholy spell,  
For all not everlasting  
Tolling out their pitying knell.

LINES ON THE OPENING OF THE CHELSEA  
THAMES EMBANKMENT.

MAY, 1874.

---

Our work is finished—now be given  
Praise to the Lord of earth and heaven—  
The massive river wall in pride,  
Now rears its head to stem the tide ;  
And, changed as if by magic hands,  
A broad and solid pathway stands,  
Where slime and fetid mud before  
Covered the air-polluting shore.  
Honour to all who strove to gain,  
For us this gift—may it remain  
Their monument. Upon its face  
Their names may unborn ages trace,  
In granite carved—that all may know  
To whom this mighty work they owe ;—  
Freeman and Tite to head the whole,  
That form the parish patriot roll.

Chelsea—a village famed of yore,  
Nestling in trees, is so no more ;  
Its power and wealth, and people claim,  
A city's rights—a city's name.  
This noble work completed now,  
With crowning beauty binds her brow ;—  
For this all Chelsea keeps to-day  
In honour, joyful holiday.  
Cast down the barriers ! Let it be  
A road for all ; for ever free ;  
Proclaim it now, with trumpet's sound,  
While joy-peals from the bells ring round.  
Enter now our glad procession,  
In triumph march to take possession ;  
Onward ! this auspicious day,  
From the spot, where veterans grey  
On their grounds—(a gallant band),  
With hands upraised, saluting stand.  
Then pass the spot, where once a king  
Away state cares was wont to fling ;  
And with his noble subject walk,  
With witty and familiar talk ;—  
Where famed Elizabeth was seen,

Oft musing 'neath the foliage green ;—  
Where Holbein's hand with finished grace  
Made deathless many a princely face.  
Then, onwards ! Pass the church that rears  
Its walls that tell of bygone years ;  
Salute it, for one worshipped here,  
Whose humble chapel is more dear  
To honest truthful hearts, than gems  
Set round unnumbered diadems ;—  
And Sloane, a name that all revere,  
Rests from his science labours here.  
The goal is reached—the task is o'er,—  
The road is given for evermore ;—  
For Labour's heavy tread—for Age,  
That slowly makes its pilgrimage,—  
For Youth and Health to meet the breeze,  
Ruffling the river and the trees ;—  
For invalids to saunter slow,  
And watch the vessels as they go ;—  
For rich and poor—an equal share,  
As the all surrounding air ;  
For these, and all, this road is free,  
Sacred to all posterity.



Now for the Queen and hers—three cheers  
And may she live to lengthened years,  
Honoured and loved—and never may  
Old England see the hapless day,  
When gallant hearts shall wanting be  
To guard the Throne and Liberty.

THE FREEING OF THE BRIDGES.

MAY 24TH, 1879.

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IN MEMORIAM.

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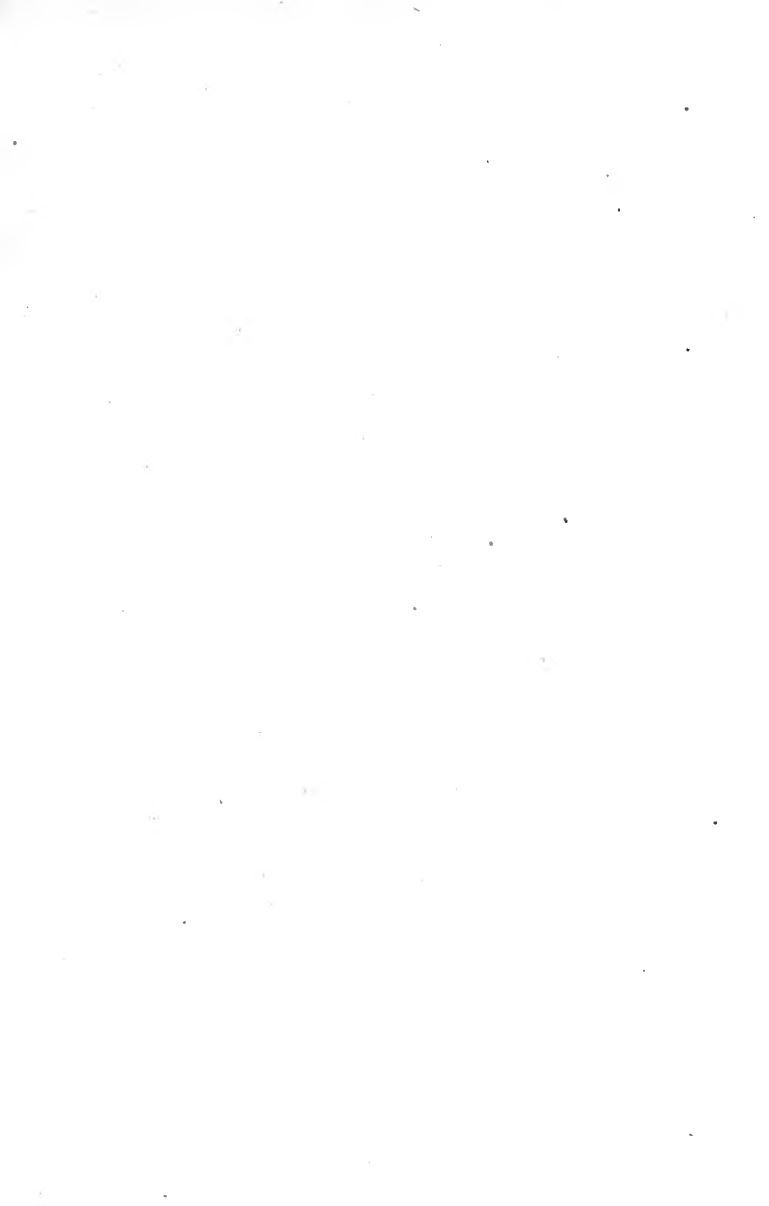
Chelsea appears in holiday attire,  
Streamers are waving gaily on the breeze,  
From house to house, and stretch across the road,  
While balconies in glowing drapery drest,  
Light up the dull house fronts, and give the streets  
A continental air. Welcomes flutter  
On banners in the warm air, or, resting,  
Speak from walls ; beside the crowded pathway  
Stand Venetian masts festooned with streamers :  
But little these would have availed without  
God's glorious gift of sunshine ; this withheld,  
All would have seemed a picture unfinished,  
Cold and lifeless ; but with it, all was bathed  
In one warm tint of harmony and joy.  
The faces of the people young and old  
Were lit by one expression ; all seemed bent

To honour him who came, at their request,  
So willingly to sanction all they did,  
And to declare their bridges free for ever.  
Children will not forget this day, but tell  
In future years their children what they saw :—  
Their Prince and Princess with Royal kinsfolk  
Without an escort came, trusting and fearless,  
Through Chelsea's crowded streets ; how peals from  
bells

Rang joyous, and royal salutes were fired  
Announcing his arrival ; how he came  
With one beside him like his good angel,  
Fraught with gentleness and beauty ; how he met  
The parish magnates, stationed at the foot  
Of Albert Bridge—come to do him honour ;  
How he with courteous condescension heard  
The address of Chelsea, and the fair Princess  
With smiling thanks received the choice bouquet  
Offered by Cadogan's Countess (Lady  
Of the Manor) with graceful ease,  
The gift of Chelsea's fair ones ; how children's  
voices

Pealed forth anon—" God bless the Prince of Wales ;"

How the band of embryo-soldiers filled  
The air with music ; how a veteran rank  
Saluted as he past ; how above all  
The poor were not forgotten : the infirm  
And aged paupers had a spot assigned  
Where they might see their future King without  
The pressure of the crowd—their faces grouped,  
(The sterner lines of age relaxed) smiling,  
Complacent with subdued enjoyment, thus  
Forming a study an artist would have loved ;  
How in one portion of the route the speed  
Was checked that a sick child, held by its nurse  
Up to a window, might behold the Prince ;  
How at night the brilliant fireworks lighted  
The heavens above, and from Old Thames beneath,  
Reflected bright, received a second birth ;  
That thus the happy day was ended, one  
On which heaven's special blessing seemed to rest.





YC 11930

