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THE PLAINT OF FREEDOM.

1852





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TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
MILTON





**O** THOU! our England's Most Divine :  
Forgive thy liege, who—sitting here  
In the shadow of thy sepulchre—  
With feeble voice would echo thine.

Who dares—Methought thy very clay  
Might tune the thinnest pipe of grafs,  
To tell the free winds as they pass  
How England lets thy grave decay.

How o'er it things abhor'd of light  
Crawl hideously; and worms obscene ;  
And daily tramlings of the Mean  
Would hide the epitaph of Might.—

Thy prophet-mantle who may wear ?  
Yet from thy car of splendour throw  
One spark on me : my Song should flow  
Volcano-voiced, for all to hear.





REVOLT his storm-flag hath unfurl'd,  
And New and Old (like giant foes  
Who, tired of distant threatenings, close)  
With desperate grapplings shake the world.

And thunder-voices rend the air,—  
For God and Right, for Elder Wrong :  
The clangour of a battle-song  
Flung heavenward in the lightnings' glare.

And Change leaps like a springtide o'er  
The landmarks of the ancient sway :  
The fierce waves hunger for their prey ;  
And monarchs tremble at their roar.

Their echoes break upon our coast—  
The isle that Freedom loved so well ;  
But stir not Freedom's Sentinel,  
Asleep on his neglected post.

The watchman sleepeth, and the fire  
Of Freedom dwindles at his side,—  
The beacon, in old days espied  
By farthest lands, will soon expire.

He sleeps as life was all forgot,  
And lower, lower sinks the flame;  
And war-cries of his youthful fame  
Peal in his dreams, but stir him not.

He sleeps, though nations shout his name;  
The sea-winds, gathering far and near,  
Shriek vainly in his drowsy ear;  
And lower, lower sinks the flame.

The storm is hush'd a breathing-space,  
And Freedom's question cleaves the gale:  
Ho, Saxon England! canst thou fail?  
Shall younger warriors take thy place?

Of old my name had been a spell  
To rouse thee from profoundest trance :  
The shadow of a winged lance  
Had warn'd thy slumber, ere it fell.

Then blazed upon thy haughtiest cliffs  
My fires, reflected in the tide  
Which gulf'd the Armada's lofty pride,—  
Scatter'd before our English skiffs.

Yet higher soar'd the flame divine,  
Whose rays illumined distant lands,  
When Milton utter'd my commands,  
And Cromwell set his foot by mine.

But now no beacon marks thy shore ;  
The old undaunted soul is fled :  
White Land ! canst thou be pale with dread  
That Freedom needeth thee once more ?

Why tarriest thou? Till sting of pain  
Excite thy tamed Berserkir rage;  
Or till our foe cast down a gage  
Not even thy strength can lift again?

What waitest thou? Till Cofsack feet  
Spur thy slow courage; till the war—  
Our sires had led to Trafalgar—  
Back desperately from street to street?

Till London croucheth to its doom:  
When strangers, stepping through our walls,  
Chaunt French Te-Deums in Saint-Paul's,  
And pile their arms on Nelson's tomb?

What sloth of heart, or brain, or limb,  
What count of fears, what doubt of Right,  
Hath hid thy spirit in this night,  
Whose clouds thy starriest honour dim?



Can Wickliffe's heirs permit the Pope?  
May Cromwell's lieges court the Tsar?  
Or Alfred's lineage shrink from war,  
With shameful peace for only hope?

And yet, thy sword a liar's tongue,  
Thy highest faith some trick of trade,—  
What marvel England's name is made  
A synonym for Coward Wrong?

The land that boldly judged a king,  
And slew the traitor for his crimes,  
Now stoopeth to the poorest mimes  
Of Tyranny,—an abject thing.

No wonder that thou darest not pile  
My beacon-fire: 'twould light the world  
To see the hydra-slavery curl'd  
In thine own heart, Unhappy Isle!

The town is thick with loathsome graves ;  
Yon fence, that girds a thousand fields,  
Shuts out the serf,—their harvest yields  
No harvest unto landless slaves.

The weaver starveth at his loom ;  
The reaper faints for lack of bread ;  
White Age may no where lay its head ;  
Decrepid Childhood hath no bloom.

O English Girl, unsex'd with toil !  
O English Matron, gaunt and wild,  
That starest on thy strangled child,—  
And there is none to loose the coil !

And O thou Son and Sire of Woes,  
Whose steps are shadow'd by Despair,—  
Thou palsied Beggar, trampled where  
Our Hampden grappled with his foes !

The circled honour and the place  
Of Genius stolen by the Mean :  
What poor weak parody of a Queen  
Insults the Elizabethan race !

A peerage,—traffic's motley throng !  
A Church,—where prelates build their styes !  
And courts of law,—where Jefferies  
Remains a precedent for Wrong !

And in the halls where Vane was heard  
Some rascal Shopman, drunken-brave,  
Babbling of State, while Fool and Knave  
Applaud a lie in every word !

A People : thousands crowd the streets,  
Exclaiming,—Freedom ! let thy grace  
Be given us in the market-place,  
Where slave his fellow-coward meets !

So realms are colonized with thieves,  
Despite the moss-grown hearths at home ;  
And starved men through the bleak world roam,  
That native fields may fatten beeves.

New chapels built, new schools endow'd,  
Of jails or hospitals no lack :  
Yet evermore the Poor Man's back  
Endures the cross and vulture-goad.

Yet, with the gift of parrot tongues,  
Priests prate of heaven, and earth a hell ;  
Or preach to Outrage,—‘ It is well !  
‘ God's luck to Villainy belongs.’

And Patriots by snug parlour fires  
Dream of their pleasant oaken wreaths,  
And well-earn'd apoplectic deaths,  
‘ In memory of ’ heroic sires.

Was it for this in Freedom's smile  
Thy childhood grew robust and strong—  
Our forest-fastnesses among—  
When baffled Cæsar fled the isle?


Was it for this that I prepared  
Thy youth in many an arduous fight?  
For this, ere thou hadst reach'd thy height,  
Against a king thine arm was bared?

Invoke the ghosts of buried days,  
To show thee what thy life should be,—  
Thy former self rebuking thee,—  
If thou darest bide a hero's gaze!

Like him who dead, in fear flung down,  
By touching but the prophet's corse,  
Revived,—so gain thou living force  
From out the tomb of old renown!



## CARACTACUS.

AER-CARADOC is hedged with steel :  
And eager warriors grasp their swords  
For death or freedom, as thy words,  
Caractacus ! inflame their zeal.

Reminding them of British worth,  
Still, as he went from man to man,  
He told how stout Cafsibelan  
Had driven the Roman Captain forth ;

And bade them strive like stalwart peers  
Of olden Valour !—Matters not  
Although Misfortune named the spot ;  
Their fame hath overlived the years.

O great in battle, in defeat  
Sublime, true freeman firmly brave,  
Whose soul no Cæsar could enslave :  
Thy glory Time shall not complete !

## ARTHUR.

No hand, uprising from the mere,  
The charmed sword bestows again ;  
And tow'rd the enchanted land in vain  
We watch for Arthur to appear.

Deep hid in death his knightly host ;  
The Saxons overspread the land  
Till, blent with many a conquering band,  
The Ancient Briton race is lost.

And cowards say,—‘ A dreamy myth :  
‘ King Arthur was not !’ There was One,  
A real man in times long gone,  
Whose life had heart of hero pith.

Up, brave of soul ! the dream is plain :  
Recast your lives in worthy mould ;  
And, rallying to some leader bold,  
Shout forth—King Arthur lives again !



## ALFRED.

No shade of doubt obscureth thee,  
Whose living fame to farthest Ind  
Was wafted on the exulting wind  
That fill'd thy sails with victory !

O old heroic scorn of ease !  
Hope rises, ne'er so often slain ;  
Despair flees with the routed Dane :  
An English navy guards the seas.

Yon glittering jewel on thy hand  
Place boldly in the public way,  
And find it there at latest day :  
For Alfred's justice walks the land.

And Learning keeps her open school  
Upon the steps of Alfred's throne.  
Speak from thy glory, Valour's Own !  
Instruct our statesmen how to rule.

## EDMUND IRONSIDE.

Again, again, the Northmen pour  
Their pirate swarms upon our coast ;  
Year after year, host following host,  
And more succeeding still to more.

Who braves the last, like stag at bay,—  
Copes hand to hand with Denmark's strength,  
Gains field on field, and fails at length,  
Not weakly, but as warriors may ?

King Edmund—king whate'er betide,  
Last worthy of our Alfred line,  
His country's chief by right divine,  
As iron-hearted Ironside.

Too late : except to close the tale,—  
Of peace grown fat with shame secure,  
And foes who make their footing sure,  
And then proud deeds of no avail.

## HEREWARD THE SAXON.

Seven feet of wild sea-beach is all  
King Harold's realm : a foreign heel  
Tramples that noble grave ; and steel,  
Which slew the free, shall scourge the thrall.

‘ Woe to the Vanquish'd ! ’—tyrant greed,  
And anarchy with sateless maw,  
And rapine scorning right and law :  
The worst a stranger's hate can breed.

Indignant tears of bearded men,  
And shrieks of outraged maids and wives,  
And servile deaths, and outlaw'd lives  
In deep morafs or savage glen.

Nor even the stubborn Hereward  
Can break the Norman's planted staff ;  
Or win beyond this epitaph,—  
‘ The last who sheathed a Saxon sword.’

## ROBIN-HOOD.

Yet better far in tangled wood  
Than palaced with the tyrant's men;  
And nobler than a Norman den  
The forest-lair of Robin-Hood.

Ay, better even for yeoman good,  
Than service under foreign lord,  
To roam at will on springy sward  
And rouse the deer with Robin-Hood.

Cease, villein! o'er thy woes to brood;  
Be woodman's law thy only friend,  
Thy quarry vengeance: out, and bend  
A freeman's bow with Robin-Hood!

A thankless life in the merry green wood:  
Natheless in the shadow of Freedom there  
Some worthier hearts may learn to dare  
An aim beyond bold Robin Hood.

## MAGNA-CHARTA.

Gleams back on glorious summer morn  
From spear and shield the flashing light,  
Where Thames' fair bank is fringed with might  
Of barons English bred and born.

'God's Army'—for the Right combined :  
What king or pope shall break their wreath,  
Or bid the sword reseek its sheath  
Till our Great Charter hath been sign'd?

Now shout ye merrily through the land!  
For all that perjured monarchs doubt,  
The Charter yet shall widen out  
Till Free and Bond have set their hand.

Shout merrily, England! Freedom's seed,—  
Whose growth our Hampden's blood bedew'd,  
Whose promised harvest Milton view'd,—  
Took root that day on Runnymead.

## FIRST COMMONS' PARLIAMENT.

What host encamps on southern downs,  
A white cross glimmering on each breast ;  
And every kneeler's heart address'd  
To Him whose will controuleth crowns ?

Halt, Monarchy ! thy wand is bent :  
The good Sir Simon rules the land ;  
And gathers to his beckoning hand  
The English Commons' Parliament.

O bloody-tinctured autumn leaf !  
How Evesham's vale is heap'd with slain ;  
Despair toils gallantly, in vain :—  
Yet God shall lift thee in his sheaf.

Set firm thy foot, thou base-born churl !  
Against the foot of mailed knight :  
And, as thou wrestlest for thy right,  
Remember Leicester's Righteous Earl !

## WICKLIFFE AND SAWTRE.

Behold where hasteneth on our view,  
Like one with tidings from afar,  
The Reformation's Morning Star,  
With all his lustrous retinue :

Free-Thought to winnow truth from chaff ;  
And Conscience, God's ordaining priest ;  
And Sacrifice that crowns the least  
With an eternal epitaph.

Make ready Sawtre's cart of flame,  
His triumph-car to God's own door ;  
And pour the full light through the floor  
That beareth Wickliffe's sainted name !

Ungrave his bones ! Swift to the sea  
Shall float his ashes fire-accursed,  
That on the curblefs tempest hearsed,  
His dust may bid the world be free.

## WAT-TYLER.

But hurl your logic fairly through!  
Since all alike are born divine,  
In right of Adam's royal line,—  
Red king and weather-purpled too,—

Let human lives, as soul with soul,  
Be equal, and their passage free:  
Unbarrier'd as the impartial sea,  
Whose waves bound onward to one goal!

Pray thou for Thor's unerring throw!  
Woe worth thy treason, Royal Knave!  
Wat-Tyler's hammer digs thy grave,  
Though falling far, and seeming slow.

Stout Saxon Workman! fling thy wrath  
On him who scorns thy homely stead,  
Who counts thee but as groats-per-head.  
Strike once, and clear thy forward path!



## WARS OF THE ROSES.

What gain is Chaucer's valorous rhyme,  
What prize the fame of Azincourt,  
If England's heart and life fall short  
Of deeds and poesy sublime?

If Wrong contending aye with Wrong,  
And Robber Robber mastering,  
Be all the sad shamed years may bring  
Their dark blood-slippery path along?

Hate copes with Hate, Power strives 'gainst Power:  
What happy strength may Discord know?  
From bitter fount what stream can flow?  
What fruit shall follow canker'd flower?

The door the fool Injustice built  
Lets in his fellow. Nought can stay  
Crime's Shadow. Fierce-wing'd Ruins lay  
Their dragon-eggs in nest of Guilt.

## KET THE TANNER.

Squeeze public weal for private gain ;  
Remove the landmarks of the poor ;  
Add field to field ; heap store on store :  
And marvel that your serfs complain.

Gather your thousands round the tree  
That canopies the Tanner's throne :  
O patient poor-folk ! cease to moan ;  
Can not those sinews make you free ?

The summer-tide is green with hope,—  
Hope all untrain'd, that only dares :  
And now what harvest home is theirs ?  
The rebel's choice of sword or rope.

So Tyler fail'd, so Ket must fail :  
The plough hath pass'd o'er Moushold Oak.  
The unheeded word the 'felon' spoke  
Time echoeth, until it prevail.

## QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Scene-shifting History!—Grief shall be  
Transfigured in the dazzling sheen  
That wreathes yon haughty-visaged Queen  
With constellated majesty.

What pageants these, with Honour's spoil?  
Rare Spenser; Sidney without stain;  
And Raleigh of the subtle brain,  
First planter in Columbian soil;

And Drake whose knightly arm had zoned  
The World, who singed the Spaniard's beard;  
With noble Effingham who clear'd  
Our seas, and Wickliffe's curse atoned;

And Shakspeare who has Fame for hearse,—  
And the world's years for pyramid—  
Where pride of kings, else ruin-hid,  
Shall lie embalm'd in richest verse.

GILBERT AND DAVIS.

Yet pass not by the pageant so!  
Some other modest names shine forth,  
To shame our huckstering years with worth  
Of souls could both believe and do.

Great Humfrey Gilbert who would spend  
Himself in toils, and danger spurn:  
Since 'death is sure and fame eterne,—  
'Wherefore I falter not, nor bend.'

Brave Master Davis, love of whom  
Led men from pleasant hearths to dare  
The trackless seas. God watch'd him where  
He met his thankless noble doom.

And Grenville, whose one hundred men  
That night off Florez did remain  
To teach the naval power of Spain  
The English of heroic then.

SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE.

A hundred men for fifteen hours  
Beat back ten thousand: morn shall see  
One bark defying fifty-three,  
And, shatter'd, foiling all their powers.

For warily distant in a ring  
Spain's great armadas baffled lie:  
Like dogs, far-watching till he die,  
Around the dying forest king.

And 'with a glad and quiet mind  
'Here die I Richard Grenville, who  
'Have done what I was bound to do,  
'Leaving a soldier's fame behind.'

A soldier's fame! What else, while Life  
Must battle momentarily with Wrong?  
Gird on thy sword, be true and strong,—  
And God absolve thee from the strife!

## SIR JOHN ELIOT.

As One who climbs from stair to stair—  
For narrow is the way and steep—  
Until he treads the topmost keep  
And plants his victor-standard there,—

So Boldness steps from age to age—  
Built, Titan-like, hill crowning hill—  
And stands, and with o'ertowering will  
Throws into heaven a champion's gage.

So clomb the dawn ere day began:  
So Eliot reacheth to his tower,  
Proclaiming thence with herald power  
The coming Monarchy of Man.

Brave Prisoner!—Quail, thou crowned Lie!  
Before that proudly wasted face:  
The firm lips asking but one grace,—  
'A little air, for strength to die.'

## HAMPDEN AND CROMWELL.

Not now may true-soul'd patriots make  
New homes, while Wrong o'erstrides their land:  
Stay, worthiest Hampden! though thy hand  
Deal but one blow for Freedom's sake.

And let the fiery zeal had sought  
Truth in the farthest wilderneys  
Harnes thy life to meet this strefs  
With iron vigour, conscience-wrought!

Thy manhood simple: daily prayer  
For strength and time:—Uplift thy brow;  
Muster thy fellows round thee now,—  
Strong-limb'd and godly men who dare!

With bloody spur Prince Robber rides  
That harvest-day from Marston-Moor:  
God made them as the straw before  
The swords of Gideon's Ironsides.

## EXECUTION OF CHARLES.

With bloody spur may Rupert ride  
From Naseby ; Dunbar shall be ours ;  
And Worcester echo on the hours  
When God was manifest on our side.

Our native fields are crimson-dyed  
With brothers' blood ; I may not wink  
At Charles in pistol-reach. Nor shrink  
From solemn tyrannicide.

Shrink not ! The traitor Stuart's doom  
Shall be a message to all days :  
The hand-writing on the wall, to craze  
Monarchic Power till Right have room.

‘ For Truth and Peace ! ’—— The psalm is sung ;  
Forth swords ! In the name of God Most High  
Charge through !—Ay ! through. Is ‘ Peace ’ a lie ?  
Are Truth and Peace but beads unstrung ?



## THE COMMONWEALTH.

Then bind the axe with lictor rods,  
Let them precede you through the street :  
That, as the years your triumph meet,  
Men may respect your work as God's.

Glory to England! at her heart  
The spirit of patriotism stirs,  
A living hope: what joy is hers!—  
And now—all childless as thou art!—

But then thy heroes pour'd their blood,  
Their wisdom, power, and wealth, for thee :  
Their duteous valour made thee free ;  
Their lives thy honour understood :

Or striding over slaughter's field,  
Or building empire on the waves,  
Or driving tyrants to their graves,  
Or rounding safety's broken shield.

## THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

Proclaim them rebels ! none the less  
The State's true servants, brave and leal :  
And never royalty more real  
Than that republican accepts.

When Cromwell held the scales of fight ;  
And Scot unravel'd treason's skein ;  
And all the soul of pious Vane  
Had scope wherein to task its might ;

When Blake was master of the sea ;  
And Ireton led the march of worth ;  
And Bradshaw's kinsman thunder'd forth  
The glorious logic of the free.

What lack'd they ? Custom's sacred oil,  
The sanction of some mouldy shelves.  
Why did they not assert themselves,  
And make the worst reproach their foil ?

## ITS DISSOLUTION.

For Right is primal law of life  
A form past legal precedent :  
So argued Cromwell, as he went  
To end their vainly formal strife.

What votes? We know they are averse.  
We ask'd no warrant for the sword :  
And shall we now let slip reward  
In terror of some coward's curse?

You would, but will not. Get you hence!  
Give place to honester attempt,  
Not weakly careful to exempt  
True deeds from challenge of offence.

Brave pilot-king! hold thou the helm ;  
And drive the vex'd ship through the storm.  
While Milton's praises Time inform,  
Blame wrecks thee not, howe'er it whelm.

MILTON.

For he was of Perfection's mould,—  
The best-beloved of Freedom's seed,  
Her councillor in depth of need  
Or standing on the steps of gold.

And day by day his course he kept  
Within the bounds of virtuous aim,—  
No razor-bridge o'er gulfs of flame,  
But the broad path where Honour stept.

Life's topmost heights he firmly trod ;  
As grandly journey'd through 'the mean' ;  
Defeat bow'd to his front serene ;  
His worn eyes ne'er lost sight of God.

And therefore Freedom did intrust  
To his sure hand her two-edged blade :  
Which slays who wrongly ask its aid,  
And only serves the pure and just.

## THE PROTECTORATE.

And Milton leans on Cromwell's hand,  
And Cromwell looks with Milton's eyes;  
Success must kneel to their emprise,  
The Future stoop to their command.

Religious Skill the nation's harm  
Shall cure, and private morals heal;  
And Justice guide the common-weal;  
And Art and Song add each its charm.

Hark! Milton's voice in Alpine pafs  
Hurls back the persecutor's sword:  
For 'England's name shall be a word  
'More dread than e'er the Roman was.'

So had it been.—What dirge-like groan  
Rends earth and sea with tempest-power?  
Great Cromwell pafses in that hour.  
Lord! make this people yet thine own.

VANE—SYDNEY—RUSSELL.

The fire is out ; Vane's life-blood pour'd  
Upon the scatter'd altar-stones :  
And ribalds desecrate the bones  
Of men whom Courage had adored.

And on the Martyrs' bloody sod  
Shame's revellers foot the embers out,—  
Save where, escaped the darkening rout,  
Two souls flash upward unto God :

A Rufsell, pleading for the right  
Of battle with tyrannic laws ;  
A Sydney, for the ' Good Old Cause '  
Republican.—And all is night.

A night to make the brave despair :  
For Circe's Bastard hath regain'd  
His wand ; and England sits enchain'd,  
Plague-smitten, stark, with horrent hair.

One fitful gleam illumes the cloud,  
 The murky pall of English Worth ;  
 The muttering thunder once bursts forth,  
 The sleeper turneth in his shroud.

What noise ? inquires the dark-brow'd king :  
 'Tis nothing, but a rabble cheer—  
 An empty shout to wake no fear—  
 The Bishops' verdict welcoming.

'Tis nothing : it hath scared away  
 Another king. 'Tis nothing yet.  
 Albeit the Stuarts' orb hath set,  
 No Morning Star brings in the Day.

There is no virtue in a choice  
 Of evil ways ; nor in the staid  
 Slow drone of caution, doubt delay'd,  
 The rhythm of an heroic voice.

PAINÉ.

Yet once again a prophet's speech  
To the dull isle an entrance finds,  
Borne upon transatlantic winds :—  
Ah, if it England's heart might reach !

And on the crimson-clouded dawn  
Of France strong English words are writ :  
Kings shake as with an ague-fit ;  
Power fleëth like a startled fawn.

Alas ! turn back the blotted page.  
The Titans under Ætna lie ;  
The prophet hath his destiny,—  
An exiled and neglected age.

Last of the Brave ! when Freedom cites  
Her Chosen, can she pass thy name ?  
True-hearted Paine, who dared proclaim  
The common-sense of human rights.



So Freedom's voice fail'd. All was still,  
Except the moaning of the sea,  
And fierce winds yelling up the lee,  
Or shrieking round some wooded hill.

No sound articulate : but tears,  
Wild gusts of iron-pointed rain,  
And raving wind and wave again,  
And sobs as of heart-breaking years.

Speak to us, thou unhonour'd Dead!  
Since living utterance is none :  
Thou that wast of our blood and bone,  
Redeem us from this close of dread!——

O eyes star-likest, dim'd, not dull!  
Proud face, so radiant through the dark!  
Deep-hearted voice!—Be hush'd to mark  
His song; then lift your chorus full!



**W**HO calleth MILTON? Is there nought  
Of manhood now in England? Bid  
The living rise! What tomb hath hid  
Thy copies of heroic thought?

Thy Coke; thy Selden; or thy Pym—  
Staunch hunter of the tyrant earl;  
Thy Blake; thy Vane—whose days unfurl  
As stately as a blazon'd hymn;

Thy Fairfax—Valour's second self;  
Thy Marten—Thought with brow unbent;  
Thy Bradshaw—Worths' fit president;  
Thy Marvel—too rich-soul'd for pelf.

Wake, thou that sleep'st on Sydney's grave!  
Up, helot-bred! The Ghosts of Old  
Point with dead fingers at thy cold  
Unpafsion'd life, thou worse than slave!

Awake! the ruddy morn grows late ;  
Resume the glories of thy line ;  
Own at the least some duty thine ;  
Up! for the Gaul is at thy gate.

Shake off the apathy has made  
Thy life an ignominious dream,  
Half sunk in Lethe's duller stream—  
The foul, slow, sullen wave of Trade!

Once more let Reverence guide thy feet ;  
And Hope's prophetic voice be raised,  
Above the clamours of the crazed,  
Above the traffic of the street!

O Hope!—What hope? Of more per cent,  
Of costlier garb, or daintier food,  
For me or you? Nay! hope of Good,  
Not shabby personal discontent.

Our Country's good: so pure that Fame  
Shall consecrate our flag as hers,  
And History's firmest characters  
Write in God's Book our England's name.

Our Country: ay! the column'd group  
Of upright fairly-cluster'd years,  
The one continuous life, that bears  
A roof where Virtue need not stoop.

Close, brethren! stand no more aloof;  
Wait not God's Woes to force you near,—  
War's iron ring of tightening fear,  
Or blind Dishonour's crushing hoof.

My England! claim again thy due—  
To teach the nations how to live;  
Nor hold thy great heart as a sieve  
For daily shames to hurry through!

The place where pedlars day by day  
Dispute their gains, or nightly rest,  
Is not our Country, but at best  
A decent caravanserai.

Step reverently! each foot of earth  
Is hallow'd ground : heroic dust  
Of sires who left their land in trust  
To me and thee, for future Worth.

What monument should mark their grave?  
Their likenefs on their ancient seat,  
And Angels with swift-winged feet  
Bringing the garlands of the Brave.

Look up! Be thou, this Present Time,  
That glorious Image of the Past ;  
And yon cloud-shadow, o'er thee cast,  
The coming of a doom sublime !

Seek Faith, that brooks no lower aims :  
The Faith in God, which works for man :  
The Faith whose martyr-name is Can,  
Whose form walks harmless thorough flames !

And welcome Honour home again,  
To guard thee like a rock-built wall,  
That shakes not though the heavens fall,  
Though Fate herself should slip her chain.

And Patriot Zeal shall spring from these :  
An armed knight with flag unfurl'd,  
Firm-held on high before the world,  
To rescue world-eternities.

And make thy life as purest glafs,  
Through which the Angel shall be seen :  
No more a cell of passions mean,  
A tomb o'erwrit with lies of brass !

So build thy house—the Church of God—  
That all may worship in its dome :  
Its poorest room a holy home,  
Whose threshold Power shall cross unshod !

And care lest, when thy servants lay  
Their dutious offerings on thy shrine,  
The woman's half—as duly thine—  
Be privily hid and kept away !

Our wiser fathers could perceive  
In woman's soul God's purer ray :  
Fair Eos of the hastening Day,  
Lead us to love, and to believe !

And bid thy children reverence thee,  
And trust themselves, and serve the True :  
Nor only teach them what to do ;  
Instruct them also how to be !



A crystal,—break it as you will,  
Howe'er minutely it divides,  
Each fragment hath its perfect sides,  
Each is a perfect crystal still.

Be thus complete! Yet ware the fault  
Of shaping, fitting overmuch,  
Till, as the most are fashion'd, such  
The few must be, and progress halt.

Brave Nature hath no general mould  
Wherein the larger and the less  
Must needs conform; but to the stress  
Of will commits the stronger-soul'd.

Nor lose in widest range of growth  
The shade which each should yield to each!  
Be every life an earnest speech;  
The nation's one according oath!

We are a nation for this end :  
That in the close familiar tie  
Our own may find a sure ally  
In war, in peace a friendlier friend.

So several strengths may interlace,  
As lovers' arms, like choosing like :  
Smile thus ! Why, Destiny dare not strike ;  
New Gods proceed from our embrace.

New Gods : for whoso serveth, he  
Is as a God ; and we, full-grown,  
No more are living for our own,  
But for the world. God ! may it be.

So, England ! though the blustering tides  
Break over thee with stormiest wrath,  
Thou shalt be sure. Brave Ark, that hath  
God's Freight. And lo, the flood subsides.

And milder skies console the lands ;  
Our bow of promise spans the years ;  
And Nations, smiling through their tears,  
Stretch forth to thee their grateful hands.

For thou didst aid them to endure ;  
Didst share their every hope and ill ;  
And bridged the future with firm will  
Whereon great actions walk'd secure.

And therefore England's name is held  
Belovéd, First of Hope's Redeem'd :  
Now Hope no longer is blasphemed,  
Since hoary Tyranny is quell'd.

And guerdons strew thy onward course,  
As in the prime of Freedom's day  
Thou gird'st thee to resume thy way,  
Rejoicing in thy giant force.

Sweet is young Pafion's lusty spring ;  
And holy is the household fire .  
Where sit the Matron and the Sire  
And watch the Blesings years must bring.

Now Summer piles his gorgeous eyes :  
The realm is crown'd with ruddly grain ;  
The lordly peasant heaps his gain,  
And bright-hair'd laughers count the sheaves.

Hark to the hammer's cheerful song !  
Thor worketh at his forge, beside  
The younger God—Art deified  
By labour lowest needs among.

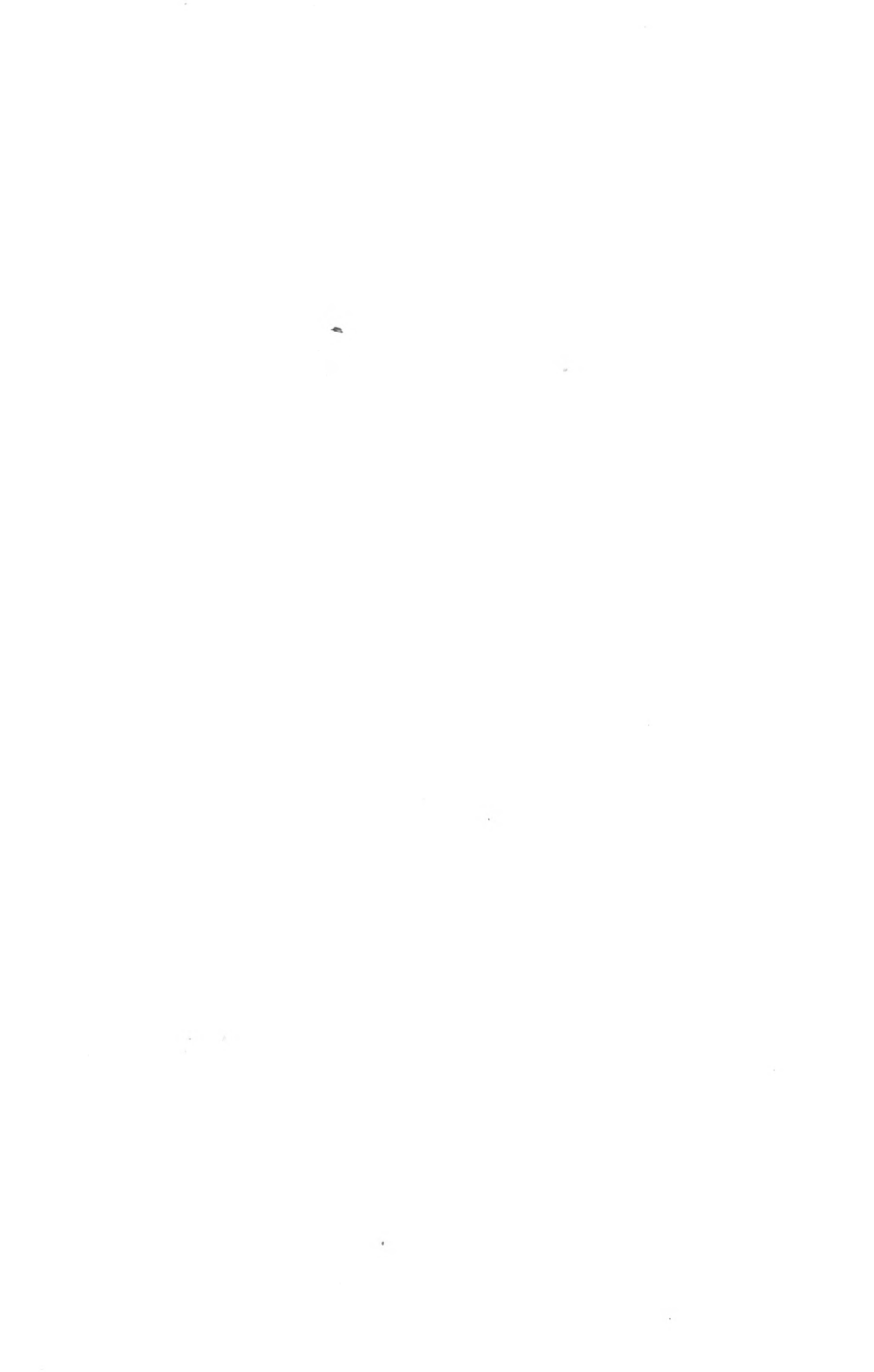
And Health enjoys his simple feast ;  
Age grows on age, like leaf on stem,—  
Each with its blofsom-diadem—  
The Statesman and the Poet-Priest.

So inward-eyed, the Prophet saw.  
Now dust is gather'd on his head ;  
How laggardly the centuries tread !  
Yet shall his dream be truth and law ;

His voice be heard in every clime  
Where English Enterprize hath trod ;  
His eyes, outworn with tracking God,  
Still choose our path to verge of time ;

His song shall be the clarion-cry  
To win us from lethargic rest ;  
His name, like a belovéd crest,  
Shall lead our force to victory.

Weak, pafionate words!—O for an hour  
Of Fame, that banded Wrong might know  
The worth of one true English blow  
Struck home with full Miltonic power!



**N**OW hang your vows upon his urn!  
Heap sacrifices o'er his tomb:  
Till that high monument become  
A mark Time's farthest may discern!

Lo where Hyperion's Image towers!  
Who climbs the height, with fitting meed  
To crown our chief? What soaring deed  
Shall reach him from these downcast hours?

Whatever life hath core of truth  
May tread the summit of the steep;  
Or with wing'd prophecy uleap  
The distance. Rouse thee, English Youth!

Kiss with pure lips the living coal  
From Freedom's altar! Learn to dare;  
Train thy brave sinews; up, and swear  
True service!—Ay! by Milton's Soul.





The leaf hath fallen, the pool is stir'd :  
    Spread, ye slow circles! far and wide,  
    And reach the shore on every side.  
So falleth my unnoticed word.

None answer : yet by that lone voice  
    The waves of air are moved, to be  
    Moved yet again, eternally.  
Dying unheeded, I rejoice.

Long grafses hide a nameless stone :  
    The poorest grafs-root hath its seeds :  
    What care though triumph's growth proceeds  
From vile remains of one unknown?

Thou, GOD ! art living. At thy side  
    Truth sits, serenely waiting till  
    The glaſs of Destiny shall fill,  
And Victory mount to claim his bride.



## NOTES



## NOTES.

When baffled Cæsar fled the isle

‘ Britain he sought, but turn’d his back dismay’d.’ *Lucan*. See also the *Commentaries* for sufficient proof.

Like him who dead, in fear flung down

‘ The bands of the Moabites invaded the land.—And as they were burying a man they spied a band ; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha : and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.’ *2 Kings, XIII. 20-1*

Whose living fame to farthest Ind

Sigelm, bishop of Sherburn, was sent to India by Alfred, with gifts for the shrine of St. Thomas.

Hereward, the Saxon

‘ England’s Darling’—as Hereward was called—was lord of Born, in Lincolnshire. He was in Flanders at the time of the Conquest : but returning, he expelled the Normans from his patrimony, aided his neighbours in like deeds, and, establishing a fortified ‘ Camp of Refuge’ in the morasses of the Isle of Ely, raised the banner of independence, and long bade defiance to the Conqueror. Starved out of his stronghold, he still maintained a guerilla warfare, subdued at last, in 1071, only by the hopelessness of the struggle, not conquered by the arms of William.

## Robin Hood

The oldest poems on Robin Hood make him a yeoman, not Earl of Huntingdon. His date is very uncertain. Stowe in his *Annals* has it 'about 1190.' Robin Hood is taken here as the impersonation of Saxon outlawry, of the long-during opposition of the people to the Norman rule.

### 'God's Army'—for the Right combined

The Barons called their force 'the army of God and his holy church.' This beginning of English liberties, well worthy our reverence as such, had however no provision for the relief of the great mass of the people, the serfs or villeins.

### What host encamps on southern downs?

The army of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, at the victory of Lewes, 1264. In the beginning of the next year, Leicester summoned the first Parliament in which the cities and boroughs were represented. After his overthrow at Evesham—on the 4th of August, 1265—Leicester was canonized by the people as a saint and martyr, and long affectionately spoken of as 'the good Sir Simon,' 'Sir Simon the Righteous.'

### Make ready Sawtre's cart of flame

William Sawtré, rector of Lynn, in Norfolk, burnt at the stake for heresy in 1401, was the first religious martyr in England.—

John de Wycliffe, the herald of the Reformation, died in his bed, at his rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, in 1384; and his body lay unmolested in the grave till 1428. But then—says quaint old Fuller, in his *Church History*—'such the spleen of the Council of Constance as they not only cursed his memory as dying an obstinate heretic, but ordered that his bones (with

this charitable caution,—if it may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people) to be taken out of the ground and thrown far off from any Christian burial. In obedience hereunto, Rich. Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, Diocesan of Lutterworth, sent his officers (vultures with a quick sight, scent, at a dead carcase) to ungrave him. Accordingly to Lutterworth they come, Sunner, Commissary, Official, Chancellor, Proctors, Doctors, and their servants (so that the remnant of the body would not hold out amongst so many hands), take what was left out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift, a neighbouring brook running hard by. Thus this brook has conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.'

### Pray thou for Thor's unerring throw

Thor, the Saxon War-God, was said to be the first-born of the Sun and Earth; for so soon as light dawns upon the chaotic earth true force begins its warfare for improvement. His gauntleted hand wielded an iron hammer which never missed its aim, with which he crushed all things that opposed the Eternal Gods.

Nearly five hundred years since (1381) Wat Tyler, the Maligner of History, demanded the political equality of all subjects of the realm, and now our intelligent villeins—mechanics 'and else'—are considering the propriety of some whig 'instalment,' of the franchise for all but 'about a million'.

### Ket, the Tanner

Robert Ket—or Knight—a wealthy tanner of Wymondham, near Norwich, headed a rebellion of the labouring-classes in 1549. Their particular grievance was the enclosure of common

lands. An army of twenty thousand men assembled round Ket's banner, and at first defeated the king's troops ; but, wanting discipline, were after a few months' bravery utterly overthrown. Ket held his tribunal under an oak—which thence was called the ' Tree of Reformation'—on Moushold Hill. Here just judgment was pronounced, whether on notorious injurers of the Commonalty or on the more disorderly of the rebel camp. And here, too, with a notable fairness, the insurgents permitted even their opponents to make ' pithy orations' against their enterprize.

And Raleigh of the subtle brain,  
First planter in Columbian soil

The first attempts at English colonization in America were made under the direction of Sir Walter Raleigh.

And Drake whose knightly arm had zoned  
The World, who singed the Spaniard's beard ;  
With noble Effingham

Sir Francis Drake was the second who sailed round the world,—the Portuguese Magellan—or Magelhanes—being the first. On the first threat of the Spanish invasion of England, Drake was sent to burn the Spanish ships in their own harbours. This he called ' singeing the King of Spain's beard.' Lord Howard of Effingham, though a Catholic, gallantly led the Protestant force of his country to victory over the invader : a noble expiation of the old insult to Wickliffe's memory,—the Papal Armada sunk in the seas which had drunk the ashes of the Heresiarch.

Great Humfrey Gilbert

Humfrey Gilbert (half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh) who gave his life and fortune to serve his country by maritime discovery. On his way home, in his last voyage, he trusted himself



1-

Nor shrink  
From solemn tyrannicide

‘It has always been as lawful to put an enemy to death as to attack him with the sword. Since then a tyrant is not only an enemy, but the public enemy of mankind, he may certainly be put to death with as much justice on the scaffold as he is opposed with arms in the field.’ *Milton’s Second Defence of the People of England.*

For Truth and Peace!

The battle-word at Waisby-Field. It passed along the line; the psalm pealed forth; and, as its last accents sank, the swords of the Ironsides flashed out, and Cromwell’s voice was heard, bidding them charge through ‘in the name of the Most High God.’ What Peace till Truth is thoroughly sure?

Or building empire on the waves

Not only by the victories of Blake and Dean, but also by that foundation of England’s mercantile greatness—the Navigation Act—the work of Oliver St. John.

Or rounding Safety’s broken shield

We owe the Habeas-Corpus Act, the independent tenure of the Judges, the abolition of feudal wardships, and the first State assertion of religious freedom, to the Long Parliament. They pressed no man in their wars; and when they had conquered Scotland, their rule was such that even an enemy was forced to utter this memorable commendation:—‘There was good justice done; and vice was suppressed and punished: so that we always reckon those eight years of usurpation a time of great peace and prosperity.’ *Burnet.*

## When Scot unravel'd treason's skein

Thomas Scot, a most industrious and successful tracker of the Stuart conspiracies, was one of the firmest and most devoted of the republican party. When Monk was smuggling in Charles the Dissolute, some of the presbyterians in Parliament were for washing their hands of the death of his father. Scot rose and said—'Though I know not where to hide my head at this time, yet I dare not refuse to own that not only my hand, but my heart also, was in it.' He desired no other epitaph than—'Here lies Thomas Scot who adjudged the King to death.' He was one of that martyr-band of ten (Vane remaining in prison till 1662, the noblest reserved to complete the sacrifice) whose blood dripped on the first steps of the 'Restoration.' At the scaffold the same high spirit spoke from his lips. His last words were a thanksgiving to God that of his grace he had engaged him in a cause not to be repented of. 'I say not to be repented of.' So stepped his soul to God.

## And Ireton led the march of worth

Cromwell's son-in-law, and lord deputy of Ireland,—of whom it has been well said—'He was a most exact justiciary in all matters of moral righteousness, and with strength of solid reason had a most piercing judgment and a large understanding.—If he erred in anything, it was in too much neglecting himself.—He was everything, from a foot-soldier to a general.' 'Firm, sober, and resolved': adds Godwin.

## For Right is primal law of life

Or, more precisely to meet the formalists:—By what *legal* right did that Long Parliament extend its session? And were they about to appeal to the People? Nay! Vane himself only sought an appeal to a select number,—those whom he thought fit to be

trusted with the franchise. Such is the mischief of your fitnesses and expediences, your so many or so few to be counted worthy. Why not Cromwell's select number as well as Vane's? Where was the 'fit' line to be drawn? If anywhere, surely outside those who had fought, and were fit to fight again, for—What? A monarchy by majority of voices, or a republic in spite of any majority?

While Milton's praises Time inform  
Blame wrecks thee not

Hear his exact words! 'You, O Cromwell! alone remained to conduct the government and to save the country. We all willingly yield the palm of sovereignty to your unrivalled ability and virtue, except the few among us. . . .'

*Milton's Second Defence..*

Algernon Sydney too, and that after the death of Cromwell, could declare that 'he had just notions of public liberty.'

*Burnet's Own Time: Book I.*

No razor-bridge o'er gulfs of flame

This and the fourth stanza are but faint paraphrases of Milton's own glorious words, in those eloquent but scarce-read works—the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and the *History of England* till the Conquest.

And Art and Song add each its charm

Such song as Milton's, and Raffaele's most subtle art. We owe the Cartoons to Cromwell.

Lord! make this people yet thine own

'Thou hast made me (though very unworthy) a mean instrument to do them some good and thee service; Lord! however

thou dost dispose of me, continue to go on and do good for them !  
Such was Cromwell's prayer, a little before his mighty soul  
passed away : amid a storm that shook all London and scattered  
wrecks on the shores of southernmost Europe.

### And ribalds desecrate the bones

The bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw, were torn out  
of their graves and exposed on the gallows at Tyburn. Their  
heads were then cut off and stuck upon Westminster Hall. The  
miserable revenge was worthy of the son of him who refused Sir  
John Eliot's body to the patriot's son. 'These be your Gods, O  
Israel !'

### A Rufsell pleading for the right Of battle

Lord William Russell's real crime was his refusal to admit the  
modern Whig doctrine of *passive obedience*: our *non-intervention*,  
when applied to other nations. He died for the sacred right of  
insurrection.—Algernon Sydney was a martyr for the 'good old  
cause' of the Commonwealth.

### There is no virtue in a choice Of evil ways

How tame and cold and poor the phlegmatic Dutch whiggery  
of 1688 contrasted with the heroism of the preceding generation !  
'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon' transformed into a trick-  
ster's pen ; and for energetic Faith the petty expediences of un-  
principled diplomatists, broadcasting the seeds of our present  
meanesses. Yet Freedom 'shall be justified of her children.'

And on the crimson-clouded dawn  
Of France strong English words are writ

Paine's Address to the French People, on the *Abolition of Royalty*: which had to be translated back again into English so late as 1843.

Thy Coke; thy Selden; or thy Pym

Sir Edward Coke, said to be too honest for a Judge, the framer, in the Parliament of 1628, of the Petition of Right, to prevent forced loans, arbitrary imprisonments, illegal billeting of soldiers, and martial law in time of peace. Coke was then fourscore years of age. 'The liberties of England'—says William Godwin—'are perhaps to no man so deeply indebted as to Sir Edward Coke.' Selden has been called the most learned man this country ever produced. He early rendered himself obnoxious to the Court by his *History of Tithes*. He, too, suffered imprisonment for the people's cause, and may justly be ranked among the nobles of our noblest epoch.—Pym—the unrelenting pursuer of Strafford, brave Admiral Blake, and Sir Harry Vane, are names we all know by heart.

Thy Fairfax—Valour's second self

Cromwell said of Fairfax, that he would rather serve under him than command the greatest army in Europe. 'The high and beautiful qualities of Fairfax'—writes Godwin. And again—'He was a most accomplished general, . . . in the field collected and vigilant, seeing every thing.' 'He was a man of eminent virtue.'

Thy Marten—Thought with brow unbent

Henry Marten, 'of an incomparable wit and a great lover of pretty girls,' reckless and dissipated; yet one of the most active

and wise and serviceable men of the time, and for his many good parts admitted to the intimacy of the gravest and most religious men of that puritanic age. 'A great observer of justice, and did always in the House take the part of the oppressed.' He is said to have been the first to openly avow the republican aims of his party ('I do not think one man wise enough to govern us all'); and he was one of the King's judges. After the Restoration he endured twenty years' imprisonment in Chepstow Castle. In the last years of his suffering, old and infirm, he was allowed an occasional walk into Chepstow village. One person admitted him into his house, and his visits here were the old man's only solace. One day his host inquired—Was the deed again to do, would he sign the death-warrant of Charles? Yes! said Marten; and he was no more received into the questioner's house. He died in his prison at the age of seventy-eight.

### Thy Bradshaw—Worths' fit president

Bradshaw, Milton's kinsman, first president of Cromwell's Council. 'The attachment of Milton is equivalent to volumes in commendation of Bradshaw': writes Godwin in his *History of the Commonwealth*. And again,—'the perfect friendship of these three men, Milton, Bradshaw, and Vane!'

Marvel's incorruptibility, like Robespierre's, has become a proverb.

### Our wiser fathers could perceive In woman's soul God's purer ray

Our German ancestors believed that the soul of woman was, through its beauty and purity, nearer than that of man to God. Some difference between this and sneering at woman-voters or using girls in mines, shirt-factories, and——.

Eos, or Aurora, is the Goddess of the Dawn, the bringer in of the Sun-God, Hyperion, the Greek Apollo. Ah, if our women would become such !

### The Statesman and the Poet-Priest

Whose callings are different : the one having to prophesy of the future, the other to organise the present. There is no intention, in any of these lines, of quitting the true poetic sphere, to insist upon any political dogma. The poet has to do with principles. Why so much stress is laid upon the almost forgotten duty of patriotism is because when once we have learned to step from self-love, and that love of family and friends which is but an enlarged self-love, to an unselfish patriotism, then the true end and aim of life and government will be made plain. And the Author has been most anxious to show that the Freedom, whose plaint he has essayed to utter, is the Freedom which forsakes personal lusts for the sake of the diviner duty. There is Anteros as well as Eros : there is also a ' Freedom ' which is not Freedom.

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