

251. a blind life. A life without the power of reason.
255. gold chains. There existed an old fancy that the earth was suspended from Heaven by a golden chain. Here, each prayer is a chain binding earth to Heaven.
259. Avilion. A mythical island in the western ocean, in Celtic legend the abode of the blessed after death.
263. crown'd with summer sea. Surrounded by the sea, as the head is encircled by a crown.
267. The belief existed that the swan sang sweetly before her death.
268. Ruffles. Spreads out her feathers.
269. swarthy web. Dark webbed feet.
271. Note that even when the barge bearing King Arthur, who represented "the old order" of things, was disappearing, a new day, with a new order of things, was already dawning.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON.

The story of *The Prisoner of Chillon* is founded on certain events in the life of Francis Bonnivard, a Swiss patriot, who was imprisoned in the Fortress of Chillon for six years. Bonnivard was born in 1496. He belonged to a noble family, and inherited a rich priory near Geneva. When the republic was attacked in 1519 by Charles III Duke of Savoy, Bonnivard came to its defence. After many adventures he was taken prisoner by the Duke in 1530, and consigned to the dungeon of Chillon. He was liberated in 1536 when the castle fell into the hands of the Swiss patriots. From this time until his death in 1571 he was prominent in the affairs of the republic.

Byron wrote this poem in 1816, a few days after visiting Chillon. At that time he was not familiar with the true facts in the life of Bonnivard and his story contains numerous details which have no foundation in reality.

The castle of Chillon is situated on a rock in Lake Geneva, and is connected with the mainland by a bridge. It was built in 1218, and served both as a fortress and a prison.

11. Bonnivard was imprisoned for political reasons, not on account of his religion.

14. tenets. Beliefs.