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THE LAST MAN.

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All worldly shapes shall melt in gloom,
The sun himself must die,
Before this mortal shall assume
Its immortality!
I saw a vision in my sleep,
That gave my spirit strength to sweep
Adown the gulf of Time!
I saw the last of human mould,
That shall Creation's death behold,
As Adam saw her prime!

The sun's eye had a sickly glare,
The earth with age was wan,
The skeletons of nations were
Around the lonely man!
Some had expir'd in fight—the brands
Still rusted in their bony hands;
In plague and famine some!
Earth's cities had no sound nor tread;
And ships were drifting with the dead
To shores where all was dumb!

Yet, prophet like, that lone one stood,
With dauntless words and high,
That shook the sere leaves from the wood
As if a storm pass'd by,
Saying, we're twins in death, proud sun,
Thy face is cold, thy race is run,
'Tis Mercy bids thee go.
For thou ten thousand years
Hast seen the tide of human tears,
That shall no longer flow.

What though beneath thee man put forth
His pomp, his pride, his skill;
And arts that made fire, flood, and earth,
The vassals of his will—
Yet mourn I not thy parted sway,
Thou dim discredited king of day:
For all those trophied arts
And triumphs that beneath thee sprang,
Hail'd not a passion or a pang
Entail'd on human hearts.

Go, let oblivion's curtain fall
Upon the stage of men,
Nor with thy rising beams recall
Life's tragedy again.
In pitying pageants bring not back,
Nor waken flesh, upon the rack
Of pain anew to writhe;
Stretch'd in disease's shape abhorr'd,
Or mourn in battle by the sword,
Like grass beneath the scythe.

Ev'n I am weary in yon skies
To watch thy fading fire;
Tost of all sunless agonies,
Behold not me expire.
My lips that speak thy dirge of death—
Their rounded gasp and gurgling breath
To see thou shalt not boast.
The eclipse of nature spreads my pall—
The majesty of Darkness shall
Receive my parting ghost!

This spirit shall return to Him
That gave its heavenly spark;
Yet think not, Sun, it shall be dim
When thou thyself art dark!
No! it shall live again, and shine
In bliss unknown to beams of thine,
By Him recall'd to breath,
Who captive led captivity,
Who robb'd the grave of Victory—
And took the sting from Death!

Go, Sun, while Mercy holds me up
On Nature's awful waste,
To drink this last and bitter eup
Of grief that man shall taste—
Go, tell the night that hides thy face,
Thou saw'st the last of Adam's race,
On Earth's sepulchral clod,
The dark'ning universe defy
To quench his Immortality,
Or shake his trust in God!

ORIGIN OF CHIVALRY.

Europe being reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion on the decline of the House of Charlemain, every proprietor of a Manor or Lordship became a petty sovereign; the mansion-house was fortified by a moat, defended by a guard, and called a Castle. The governor had a body of 7 or 800 men at his command, and with these he used frequently to make excursions, which commonly ended in a battle with some lord of some petty state of the same kind, whose castle was then pillaged, and the women and treasures borne off by the conqueror. During this state of universal hostility, there was no friendly communication between the provinces, nor any high road from one part of the kingdom to another; the wealthy traders, who then travelled from place to place with their merchandize and their families, were in perpetual danger; the lord of almost every castle extorted something from them on the road; and at last, some one, more rapacious than the rest, seized the whole cargo, and bore off the women for his own use.

Thus castles became the ware-houses of all kinds of rich merchandize, and the persons of the distressed females, whose fathers or lovers had been plundered or slain, and who being, therefore, seldom disposed to take the thief or murderer into favour, were in continual danger of a rape.