

Herod is at any rate very angry when he hears of the inquiry, and exclaims,

I am the greatest above degree,
That is, that was, that ever shall be;
The sun it dare not shine on me,
If I bid him go down.
A boy, a groom of low degree
To rise against my royalty!
Sir Doctor, that are chiefest of clergy
Look up at thy books of prophecy,
And what thou seest tell thou me.

The "Doctor" quotes Jacob's prophecy concerning the Shiloh, when Herod bursts out,

That's false, by Mahound, full of might,
That old vylarde Jacob doted for age,
What presumption should move that peevish page,
Or any elfish godling to take from me my crown.

He rages horribly, and orders the slaughter of the children.

Have done and fill the wine high,
Fill fast and let the cups fly,
I die, but I have drink.

In the meantime the kings present their gifts to the baby Sovereign of the world. The first gives gold

For it seemeth by this place
That little treasure His mother has.

The next offered incense, and the third thirty pieces of money—"gilt pennies," they are called. These "pennies," according to the veracious legend, were the identical coins with which Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah, for which Joseph was sold by his brethren, and for which Judas afterwards betrayed his Master. Of few things else save the Holy Grail, and the stone on which the English sovereigns are crowned—which last, it is well known, was the very stone that Jacob used as a pillow—can the history be so marvellously traced. "Our Ladye Marie" left most of the presents, with the child's swaddling clothes, in the cave, when she fled into Egypt; and there they remained till discovered by the pious Empress Helena! During the flight into Egypt the Holy Family are attacked by robbers. One of these relents, beholding their poverty; but the other is exceedingly fierce. The infant