

"What a flow!" she said. "Most impassioned. I had no idea—"

Heniker agreed with her. He desired keenly to know what Rose Pierson thought; but she kept her looks for the fire.

Mrs. Welbore had resumed her needlework; and Heniker, seeing that if he spoke at all it must be of Bendish, and if of Bendish, to invite his praises, sat silent. The poet returned to his place on the hearth and declaimed a good part of *The Billiad*: a Satire.

Billy was, of course, our new King; the *Billiad* (reflex of his recent Homeric studies) was a forecast, put in mock retrospect, of his *faits et gestes*; rather of those of his ministers. Done with astonishing verve, with a ridicule which occasionally defeated itself, but a keenness of sight which omitted nothing, it had, with all that, a real literary flavour. Its fault—and it was a fault of youth—was that it spared nothing, but mocked the evil with the good. It was, in fact, as nihilistic as a young man can make it who enjoys the sense of doing a thing rather than the thing doing, and has a sharper eye upon the effect than the cause. There was unfortunately nobody present who knew how good it was. To Mrs. Welbore, the Duke of Devizes was not only a hero, but a Duke and a Prime Minister. References therefore to his unsafe seat in the hunting-field, to his indiscriminate gallantries, to his dry manner and sensibility to the tears of ladies passed over her head. These things did not happen to the great—for were they not great? How can you make ridiculous that