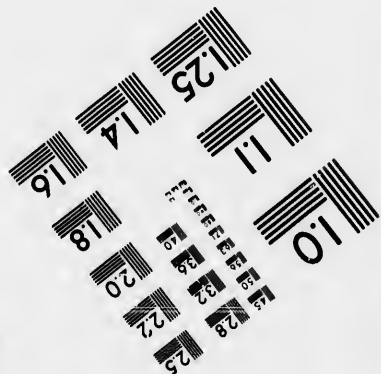
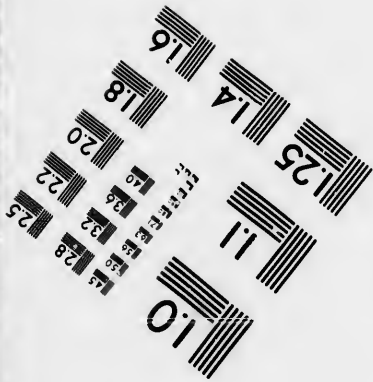
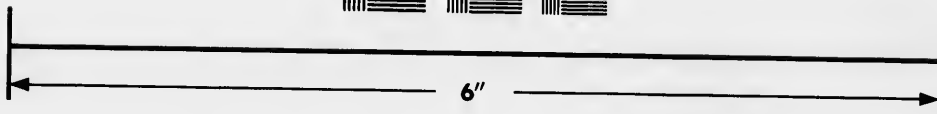
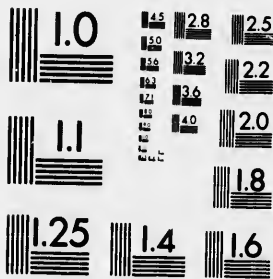


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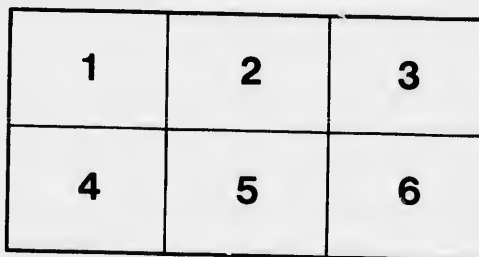
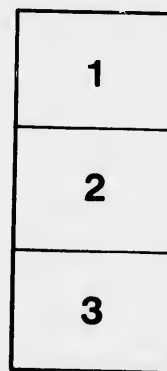
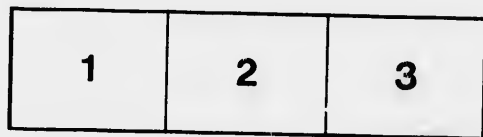
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*Geoffrey Chaucer*  
*from the work*  
 THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

BOOK FIRST.

ARGUMENT.

Invocation.—Departure of Harold, son of Godwin, from England on a voyage to Normandy.—Object of his visit stated.—Edward the Confessor's warning.—The storm and the shipwreck of Harold and his companions, on the coast of Ponthieu.—They pass the night on the sea-shore.—Their interview with Guy, the ruler of that country.—A ransom is demanded of Harold, which being refused, he and his companions are cast into prison by Guy.—Message to and from William, Duke of Normandy.—Release of Harold by Guy, the Duke of Normandy having paid the required ransom.—Harold's arrival at Eu, in the territories of William.—His reception there by that Prince.—Description of the Normans, with a brief account of their settlement on the banks of the Seine.—Historical sketch of Rollo and his line to William the Conqueror, with an outline of the youth of that Prince.—Harold goes to Rouen.—His reception there.—Short description of that court.—Matilda and her sister Judith.—Harold's visit described.—He meets his brother Ulf, and Haco his nephew, the son of Sweyn the outlaw.—Their advice to Harold.—His conduct and feelings described.—Means adopted by William and those around him, to gain the friendship and alliance of Harold.—Brief sketch of Normandy as it then was.—Tour of Harold and his companions with William, through parts of that country.

Of that proud Norman who to England came,  
 And by strong arm achieved a conqueror's fame;  
 Of Harold's fate whose valor shone in vain  
 On Hasting's field, where the great chief was slain,  
 I sing. Inspire my song, O Muse; for vast  
 The theme designed: with eye serene, the past  
 With me survey, where states obscurely rose  
 On time's dark waste, amid the boundless woes

A

*This poem was written by  
 the late Justice Cornwallis Monk.*

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And wrath of nations, fiercest of that day,  
But blended now beneath a mightier sway :  
Reveal of ruthless men, designs profound,  
On conquest bent, by cruel conquest crown'd :  
Relate how Harold was induced to swear  
A fatal oath ; how, thoughtless, to declare  
A vassal's fealty to his country's foe ;  
Pleas for dread crimes, chief cause of so much woe :  
Pourtray the conflict, horrors of that day,  
When England sunk beneath the Norman's sway,  
Close by the spot which marks her hero's grave,  
In that bright Isle, he died in vain to save :  
To me impart, for time long since hath spread  
Oblivion's shade o'er the renowned, the dead,  
High thoughts once theirs, that these perchance may live,  
And thro' the future in men's minds survive ;  
Nor let the glories of that distant age,  
Pass here unsung, grow dim upon my page.  
Now Godwin's son, Prince Harold, great and free,  
With spreading sail stood joyfully to sea :  
Grave, tried companions, men of martial fame,  
Young nobles too, of proudest Saxon name,  
With him embarked. The sky and winds were fair,  
Though other scene they soon with him must share.  
Two royal ships equip'd to sail the deep,  
Ride proudly on, and close their courses keep ;  
Swift are they borne before the rising blast,  
From England's shore toward the Norman coast,  
To which Duke Harold and his suite are bound,  
A realm to view in arts and arms renowned,

880376

And him to greet who ruled that famous land  
 By wise decrees, and with a warlike hand.  
 He sought, withal, his kinsmen to release,  
 By him beloved, once hostages of peace,  
 Whom haughty Godwin to his sovereign gave,  
 When the good king that rebel sought to save.  
 Assured he was Duke William would restore  
 His brother Ulf, whom many a year before,  
 With Haco too, King Edward thither sent,  
 As Princely guests (at least such his intent)  
 To the great Norman and his friendly court,  
 To guard the oath, the pledge he did extort.  
 Their exile oft by Harold had been blamed,  
 And their release he earnestly had claimed.  
 At length the Norman solemn promise made,  
 That their return no longer should be stayed.  
 This being granted to Prince Harold's prayer,  
 Strong grew his wish to visit, seek them there;  
 But that design much did King Edward blame,  
 And from his lips these words of warning came:  
 "Most noble Harold, much thy fame I prize,  
 And thy great life is light to Saxon eyes;  
 Thy kinsmen loved have weary exile borne,  
 And still with thee I wait for their return:  
 'Tis true, alas! my trust hath been betrayed,  
 And their release for many a year delayed:  
 But didst thou know that cruel Norman's heart,  
 His crafty mind, the all-perfidious part  
 Which mars the glories of his later life,  
 And oft displayed in long career of strife,



Not to his shores thy eager steps would lead,  
 But thou wouldst shun those perils I now dread :  
 Once with Duke William, who misdoubts thy power,  
 Thy step will falter from that fatal hour :  
 His aim will be to bind, betray, destroy,  
 To blight that fame yet pure from earth's alloy ;  
 And thou wilt learn, wilt learn, perchance, too late,  
 That his resolves are like decrees of fate :  
 Harold, go not ; one less illustrious send,  
 Be he a stranger, brother, or some friend."

The warlike Prince made modest, grave reply,  
 That such designs he scorned and would defy :  
 He did not fear the Norman Duke to greet,  
 Despite the dangers which might there await ;  
 That he now hoped his kinsmen to release,  
 To cause their bondage and their woes to cease.  
 The monarch's fears the hero could not share,  
 And for that journey promptly did prepare.  
 King Edward yielded, yielded with a sigh,  
 While unshed tears stood in his aged eye.

Full half the voyage Harold thus had run,  
 When black as Hell, and with the setting sun,  
 A storm arose. Propelled by north-west winds  
 Toward that shore which fertile Ponthieu binds,  
 The ships are borne, by waves of ocean toss'd,  
 And headlong drive full on the rocky coast.  
 Soon darkness broods upon the raging deep ;  
 No more the ships upon their course they keep ;  
 Vast, sullen clouds which flash with horrid glare,  
 Move tempest-charged athwart the fields of air ;

The viewless winds from realms of night and fear,  
 O'er ocean rush upon their winged career ;  
 The angry billows lift their heads on high,  
 And toss the ships up to the lurid sky,  
 Then dash them low into the wild abyss,  
 Where ocean's depths in Stygian horror hiss :  
 O'er the dark waste the livid lightnings play,  
 But show no hope upon that trackless way ;  
 The volleying thunders peal from cloud to cloud,  
 And add new terrors to the wasting flood ;  
 Torrents descend, and louder howls the storm,  
 And dangers threaten death in direst form.  
 Before the blast the heaving vessels fly,  
 Their canvas gone ; and oft is heard the cry,  
 The shrieks of men which on the winds arose,  
 As fiercer now and still the tempest grows :  
 The ships speed on ; one by a rocky isle  
 Sweeps merging near and almost strikes the while ;  
 But passing thence, direct upon the coast,  
 She strands, rebounds, and on the shore is cast.

Hard following there thro' all that dreadful scene,  
 Each noble bark in peril like had been ;  
 And though dismay had seized upon the brave,  
 And all seem'd sinking to a watery grave,  
 By stern command still order to maintain,  
 Firm Harold stood ; but strength of soul was vain ;  
 For soon went forth a shriek of wild despair,  
 The wail of men about to perish there,  
 And Harold's ship struck with upheaving shock,  
 Then with a plunge was dash'd upon the rock.

Now naught was heard save the dark tempest's roar,  
 And the loud wrath of ocean on that shore.  
 Thus hurled, o'erborne by the remorseless surge,  
 The lashing waves the double wreck submerge,  
 And death impends at that ill-omened hour,  
 O'er all the life these vessels thither bore,  
 As the wild sea, with each receding wave,  
 Seeks to engulf them in unfathomed grave ;  
 But firm their footing crew and nobles keep,  
 And safe emerge from the involving deep.  
 Unnumbered perils these brave men had pass'd,  
 And there unite in plight forlorn at last.  
 No spark they bear the cheerful blaze to start,  
 No covering near a shelter to impart :  
 On that lone shore the dismal night wanes slow,  
 Cold skies above and earth's damp bed below :  
 On strand unknown they thus untime'ly cast,  
 Await the dawn beneath the midnight blast.

From Eastern skies which day's first beams adorn,  
 Slow breaks the light thro' clouds that veil the morn ;  
 Far o'er the main now sweep the mists of night,  
 Swift on the paths of tempests in their flight ;  
 And on that waste, where man hath fixed no home,  
 Rush the wild winds and high the billows foam.  
 The Saxons, shipwrecked on that sea-beat strand,  
 Beheld new dangers in a savage land.  
 A forest dense, as far as eye could reach,  
 With foliage dark extended to the beach,  
 Where high on rocks, beneath the ocean spray,  
 Their noble ships in shapeless ruin lay.

No homes they saw, deserted no trace of man,  
 And thus perplexed, they further search began.  
 They wandered long, and glad at length to gain  
 The spot where Somme's dark waters cleave the main,  
 They there beheld the light of better hope,  
 In those long perils wherewithal they cope.  
 Soon the fierce natives, dwellers on that stream,  
 Whose banks with hostile population teem,  
 To those worn strangers, rescued from the wave,  
 Cold words addressed and harsh reception gave.  
 Straightway they led them to their haughty chief,  
 Ponthieu's proud Earl, whose sneering words were brief.  
 That small dominion, independent then,  
 Had long been governed by rapacious men ;  
 Its feebler frontier in disastrous hour  
 Had felt the pressure of the Norman power ;  
 And, tho' not ruled by that ambitious state,  
 Much William's influence it had known of late.

When first Prince Harold to Guy's presence came,  
 And to that chieftain was announced his name,  
 With lordly gesture and triumphant look,  
 The Saxon thus with insolence he spoke :

" Thou art Duke Harold, Godwin's famous son !  
 A prize so great, in truth I've easy won !  
 Thou art no doubt, upon this peaceful shore  
 Some fruitful scene of rapine to explore.  
 For thy release a ransom I shall claim  
 From all your band, and the amount I name,  
 Which, promptly paid, thy freedom take again :  
 Thy lordly person I would not detain."

To whom the Prince, with look of scornful pride,  
And haughty words, indignantly replied :

“ By insult, wretch, our woes thou dost relieve !  
Is this the welcome strangers here receive ?  
Cast in distress upon this savage shore,  
Plunder awaits, awaits us something more.  
A robber’s den would human suffering shield,  
And from foul wrong would greater safety yield.  
From thee I claim, both for myself and these,  
Complete exemption from thy impious laws.  
My friends dismiss, let them go hence away ;  
I, if need be, will as thy prisoner stay.”

To whom the Earl a sneering answer made,  
And growing fury in his words betrayed :

“ My will thou know’st ; ’tis thine now to obey,  
Or drag thy chain till all a ransom pay.  
This law’s well known ; ’twas oft enforced before,  
By thy command on many an English shore :  
I hold no parley : this undoubted right  
And this my due, I will exact, great knight.  
When thou art willing, ready to comply,  
Then free depart, but no evasion try.  
Till then a dungeon claims thee, mighty lord ;  
Thence thou wilt go at my command, my word.”

Harold, incensed, with fierce and flashing eye,  
In accents harsh to Ponthieu made reply :

“ No prey, despoiler, shalt thou wrest from me :  
Such base concession, foul reproach would be :  
If naught can now our lives, our freedom shield,  
To Heaven’s will, but not to thine, we yield :

Thy power we here and everywhere defy,  
 Nor will these hands a ransom e'er supply.  
 In this defiance we unite, combine :  
 This, our resolve ; act boldly now on thine."

To these stern words, to Harold's firm intent,  
 His Saxon followers murmured their assent.  
 Such proud resistance Guy had not foreseen,  
 Or his demand in milder terms had been.  
 He deemed the Saxons ransom prompt would pay,  
 Or to obtain it, ask a brief delay.  
 Besides, his memory keenly could retrace  
 Deep wrongs inflicted by that hated race,  
 Against his sire upon his native shore,  
 And unredressed thro' many a year before ;  
 But Harold's words and accents had combined  
 Something that awed his rude and ruthless mind.  
 A soldier he of fierce and savage soul.  
 And o'er his subjects wielding dread control ;  
 And thus defied, his will must be obeyed,  
 Nor in such moment weakness be displayed.  
 A thousand men, the vassals of the land,  
 Surround him now, obey his stern command.  
 The Saxon nobles, Harold at their head,  
 Were promptly thence into a dungeon led.  
 Refused the ransom, in Belrain detained,  
 Six weary days imprisoned they remained.  
 Once more did Harold plead his nobles' cause,  
 And for them sought exemption from these laws :  
 In vain he sued ; his prayer could not prevail :  
 The Earl refused, was deaf to all appeal.

He then informed this chieftain of Ponthieu,  
 The robber Guy who rich by rapine grew,  
 That he a message, fraught with grave import,  
 From Edward bore to William's sov'reign court:  
 The right he claimed, his faith then to evince,  
 And of his mission to apprise that Prince.  
 The Earl of Ponthieu gave a prompt consent,  
 And Harold's missive to the Norman sent.  
 With joy Duke William this despatch received,  
 And all the value of the prize perceived;  
 For Harold then was man of vast renown,  
 The foremost subject of great England's crown;  
 And in designs which William's hopes had shared,  
 This mighty Prince could highest aid afford.  
 From Guy of Ponthieu his release was claimed,  
 And in mild words all harsh restraint was blamed:  
 Enjoined he was as guests to entertain  
 The noble Prince and all his knightly train;  
 That to his court unhindered he should bring  
 The royal message of the English king.  
 The Earl of Ponthieu courteous answer made,  
 But all refused till ransom should be paid:  
 If this were done, Prince Harold he would send,  
 Without delay, and would himself attend  
 Him on his journey to Duke William's court,  
 And, if required, would find secure escort.  
 The crafty Norman, with high hope to gain  
 The Saxon's heart, did his release obtain;  
 He ransom paid and ceded tracts of land,  
 And bought a freedom might could not command.

By William's aid, though fatal it may be,  
 Once more Prince Harold and his friends were free.  
 To Eu's fair town, in after times renowned,  
 The Norman soon with noble suite was bound :  
 Thither he went, these foreign lords to meet,  
 And chiefly Harold joyfully to greet.  
 The Saxons came, the Duke received them there,  
 With regal court'sy, eager to repair  
 The recent wrong, still fresh in Harold's heart,  
 And unatoned, might cold distrust impart.  
 William bland words, kind greetings now bestowed  
 Upon his guests and courteous arts employed.  
 Him he besought, nor then implored in vain,  
 As allied Prince long with him to remain ;  
 That Ulf and Haco, free at his demand,  
 Should both again behold their native land ;  
 That one and all, with freedom unconfined,  
 Would at his court a ready welcome find.  
 And Harold deemed that all this friendship shown,  
 Might yet, tho' feebly, for the past atone ;  
 For years of exile, many a bitter hour,  
 Since first his kinsmen felt the Norman's power.  
 Duke William seemed in every act so just,  
 That his fair words gained all the Saxon's trust.  
 From Norway's shores the mighty Normans came ;  
 At first so rude, nor laws nor arts could tame.  
 The Danes and Saxons kindred nations were,  
 And with the Normans oft did rapine share.  
 Their daring souls were fierce as northern blasts,  
 Which swept their homes around those icy coasts :



Stern ocean kings, the scourges of the earth,  
Their conqu'ring legions from the gloomy north,  
In sudden fury broke o'er southern climes,  
And filled with terror those disastrous times;  
Barbarian forms, inured to every wind,  
In darkest peril enterprise they found;  
They smote, they vanquished, both on land and wave,  
Nor mercy sought, nor quarter claimed nor gave.  
From island haunts far in the northern sea,  
Those cruel corsairs, ever wandering free,  
Thro' realms remote spread mourning and despair,  
And conquests made in regions rich and fair.  
Along the Seine their bloody course had been,  
With fire and sword 'mid many a fertile scene.  
Still on they pressed, a savage, fearless band,  
And, all subduing, seized that glorious land.  
Thro' years of war, amidst a ruined race,  
Their ruthless deeds historians still may trace.  
East, west, and north, around the Gallic shore,  
Their pirate-flag and blood-stained arms they bore.  
The hamlet burned, the fruitful vale despoiled,  
Blest homes of peace, where humble hope had toiled;  
Long bondage, tears, wild fury and alarms,  
Attested still the progress of their arms:  
All fled, or perished where their wrath assailed,  
Nor strong defence against such foes prevailed.  
Fair cities sacked, proud works of ages gone,  
In ruins lay and nations were undone.  
They cease from slaughter and their booty seize,  
Place it in ships and slacken to the breeze:

From land they put and court the rising gale,  
 With dipping oar and feeble fluttering sail.  
 Thro' midnight hours o'er pathless seas they fly,  
 And guide their barks by twinkling stars on high.  
 Oft they return, return but to renew  
 Dread scenes of ravage, spoil and carnage too.

And now full nigh two hundred years had fled,  
 O'er living generations and the dead,  
 Since Rollo's fleet before fair Rouen rode,  
 Where the great chief soon fixed his firm abode,  
 As mighty leader of a warlike band,  
 Which long he swayed with stern, supreme command.  
 Of matchless strength, a demi-god in war,  
 On many a shore he plundered near and far :  
 The main he ruled, where'er his bark rode free,  
 And that wild name was known on every sea.  
 Rouen he sought with a resistless force,  
 And paused at length, upon his bloody course.  
 That ancient spot, to fame and splendour grown,  
 In early times had scenes immortal known,  
 Ere fire and sword had laid the land in waste,  
 And marked the epochs of a fearful past.  
 Tho' his companions lawless force supplied,  
 They entered there, but not in martial pride :  
 A holy prelate gained the man of blood ;  
 His sacred voice the Northman's wrath withstood ;  
 He soft'ning influence on his mind did wield,  
 He from his fury did the city shield.  
 There Rollo reigned ; and thence, in earlier day,  
 By rapine, murder, spread his iron sway.

Westward of this, nor from the sea remote,  
 Bayeux was built, a place of ancient note.  
 Against that town soon Rollo marched in wrath,  
 And thro' that region spread the work of death.  
 The siege was formed and the assault prepared,  
 And Rollo's summons to the town declared ;  
 Which, disregarded by the hosts within,  
 The dread assault was ordered to begin.  
 Dark was the scene, and dark the fatal hour,  
 And fierce the onset of the Norman power.  
 A mighty chieftain, Berenger by name,  
 And long illustrious on the rolls of fame,  
 Holds chief command along the lofty walls,  
 And bravely dies before the city falls.  
 The furious Northmen quickly enter there,  
 And plunder, ravage, but the people spare.  
 The fallen chief is found among the dead,  
 'Neath heaps of slain, upon a bloody bed.  
 One child he left, had left upon that morn,  
 The cherished hope of love, of years forlorn :  
 Her youth, like flower upon a barren waste,  
 Was in those times of war and rapine cast :  
 Her mother slept, had died in early years,  
 But she remained to soothe her father's tears :  
 Popæa named. When Rollo sacked the town,  
 This prize he seized, and claimed it for his own.  
 With pagan rites he made her then his bride,  
 A star 'mid storms, to better hopes a guide.  
 From this fair Christian whom he loved and wed,  
 There sprung a son and daughter to his bed :

William and Gerloc were the names they bore :  
 She died in youth ; but he lived to restore  
 A brighter lustre to the sovereign power,  
 Which on him frowned in youth's all evil hour.  
 Great Rollo led his warlike legions on,  
 Thro' bloody paths of conquest and renown.  
 With Charles of France he soon a treaty made,  
 By which his power and wisdom were displayed,  
 And of his throne, the sure foundations laid.  
 St. Clair sur Epte was chosen for that act,  
 And there was formed that long and firm compact,  
 By which the Dukedom, Charles to Rollo gave,  
 And other lands, to gain a chief so brave.  
 With one fair daughter this great king was bless'd,  
 Giselle by name, of noblest gifts possess'd ;  
 Bright with rare beauty, hopes of youthful years,  
 Ere secret woe had dimmed her eyes with tears.  
 Victorious now o'er all that could oppose,  
 The warlike Norman wished for peace, repose ;  
 And then he sought to take Giselle to wife,  
 That thus allied, might end their fatal strife.  
 He promptly too, foreswore each pagan rite,  
 And on his soul there beamed a holier light :  
 A Christian ruler Rollo soon became,  
 And to his vassals did this change proclaim :  
 Thro' his dominions wise decrees he sent,  
 Which to his rule, both strength and glory lent :  
 Stern laws prevailed, wild rapine reigned no more,  
 And peace and order spread from shore to shore.

Long had Popæa pass'd from Rollo's heart,  
 Whose words of scorn had caused her to depart.  
 Her son he loved, but cast the mother out,  
 To wander far on many a homeless route ;  
 With bruised heart, which life's last woe had found,  
 That proud, lost child of fallen race renowned.  
 The fair-haired daughter of a mightier line  
 Usurps her place, the heart she must resign :  
 And grief had worn Popæa's faded brow,  
 But Giselle lived and mourned in childless woe.  
 Rollo now trod the shadowy vale of life,  
 Long worn by years, by peril and by strife.  
 His warlike son had grown to mighty fame,  
 And shielded well his mother's blighted name :  
 His glory came, but came, alas ! too late,  
 Not to adorn, but to avert her fate.  
 Thus time had pass'd ; Giselle, Popæa, died,  
 And the great Norman slumbered by their side.  
 William Longue Epée, Popæa's famous son,  
 By Rollo's will succeeded to the crown.  
 He swayed the sceptre with a monarch's hand,  
 And peace maintained throughout the Norman land ;  
 And foreign triumphs in his prosp'rous hour,  
 His arms achieved in aid of tottering power.  
 Louis of France, he placed upon the throne,  
 And Flanders' Earl did his protection own.  
 By treach'rous deed, the latter laid him low  
 In pride of life, by an assassin's blow ;  
 But vengeance came ; by mightier arm he fell,  
 Long, long resolved, fulfilled at last too well.

Richard his son succeeded him and reigned,  
 His power vast and sternly too maintained.  
 This valiant prince, Sans Peur, was proudly styled,  
 In war too fierce and oft to wrong beguiled.  
 First he espoused, and mournful was her fate,  
 Agnes the Fair, the child of Hugh the Great ;—  
 That Count of Paris who proud monarchs swayed,  
 Chief of a line by nations long obeyed.  
 This Agnes died in sorrow and despair ;  
 No child she left,—to Normandy no heir.  
 Then a young maid of humble birth he loved,  
 Honor of Arques, and she the mother proved  
 Of sons and daughters, dynasties renowned,  
 By famous deeds, in after ages crowned,  
 And these among, Proud Emma may be found :  
 Emma the Queen of Ethelred became,  
 Mother of him whom men Confessor name.  
 Honor he made in course of time, his bride,  
 And to their offspring legal rights supplied ;  
 He glorious lived, in peace of God he died.  
 Then reigned Duke Richard, second of that name,  
 Son of Sans Peur, and Prince of warlike fame.  
 He with the Saxons and with others warred,  
 And, when victorious, nobly them he spared.  
 Him his son Richard followed as of right ;  
 But soon he passed into the dreamless night,  
 Of death's long sleep, which comes upon us all,—  
 Our earthly doom since Adam's fault and fall.  
 Long it was bruited thro' the Norman land,  
 That this fair Prince died by a brother's hand ;

A foul, dark deed of poison and despair,  
 That one proud man the kingdom then might share.  
 When he was gone, that brother reigned instead,  
 Robert the Great, well known for many a deed  
 That gave far glory to his name and race,  
 Tho' some there were, my page will not retrace.  
 His skill and valor shone in deeds of war,  
 Which oft he waged in Christian lands afar :  
 In these renowned, and also great in peace,  
 Much did his rule the Norman state increase ;  
 For this great Prince, whose celebrated court  
 To fall'n sov'reigns proved a sure resort,  
 Employed his sword the feeble to restore,  
 And his proud arms to France and Flanders bore.  
 Baldwin the Fourth, he placed upon his throne,  
 And the like act for the French king had done.  
 As a reward for friendship thus displayed,  
 Henry of France, The Vexin all conveyed  
 To the proud Norman, who in war became,  
 Of his own time, the most illustrious name.

Now at Falaise a royal castle stood,  
 Which thro' long years, despite time, war and flood,  
 A fortress' strength and strong defence maintained,  
 And the assaults of armies had sustained.  
 There Robert oft in expeditions dwelt,  
 And for that spot, a rare attachment felt.  
 From those proud towers a rich and varied view,  
 Of gardens, fields and groves of every hue,  
 Glowed in the beam, beneath the summer sky,  
 And fixed the thoughtful, long-enraptured eye ;

While far beyond receding landscapes lay  
In sweet repose, thro' the refulgent day.  
There by a stream which wound thro' distant vales,  
Clothed in soft verdure, cooled by western gales,  
'Mid woodland hills and sloping fields between,  
And stretching far in many a rural scene,  
A cottage stood, a poor man's home of peace,  
Who by his hand still laboured to increase  
What toil had won, and strove each weary day,  
And anxious there pursued his humble way.  
He had one daughter, grown to woman's years,  
Adorned with beauty, all that youth endears ;  
Her parents' pride, their latest, only hope  
Their age to bless and with its ills to cope.  
It came to pass upon a summer's eve,  
At that blest hour when peasants labor leave,  
On the green bank, from vulgar view concealed,  
In homely garb that lovely maiden kneeled :  
Her daily task the virgin followed there,  
While vesper-bells proclaimed the hour of prayer.  
A warrior chief with hounds and huntsmen nigh,  
Approached the spot and Herlève met his eye.  
Tho' time and war from his strong heart had worn  
The tameless ardor which its youth had borne,  
He halted near that maid and winding stream  
Which sweetly flowed beneath the evening beam ;  
Spell-bound he gazed upon the matchless face,  
Her radiant brow and form's unrivalled grace :  
The damsel rose, and her obeisance made  
To the great Prince ; a few brief words were said.



Then Robert went, his stately castle sought,  
 And there Herlève, in course of time, was brought.  
 Her heart he won: thro' long and baffled years,  
 He oft for her would shed atoning tears:  
 But from that love thus hapless and unblest,  
 A child was born, of dauntless soul possess'd.  
 That outcast son, the warlike father loved,  
 And to his court he early was removed;  
 In after days a Prince in war renowned,  
 High on the roll where earth's great names are found:  
 That monarch he, whose proud, immortal name,  
 Of England's Conqueror, fills the page of fame;  
 Illustrious still thro' many an age and clime,  
 In present, past and so in future time.  
 Zeal for the Cross Duke Robert long had shared,  
 And to the East a pilgrimage prepared;  
 But ere he went he caused Him to be brought,  
 And his great nobles, anxiously besought,  
 That as his heir, this child they would obey,  
 And made them swear allegiance to his sway:  
 He them implored his heritage to shield,  
 And to his cause, their arms and counsel yield.  
 The father died in some far Eastern land;  
 Then the young William with a warrior's hand,  
 The sceptre seized, and claimed the Norman throne,  
 And forced the nobles doubtful rights to own.  
 'Mid many a peril he to manhood grew,  
 And dark the paths his boyhood did pursue:  
 Powerful rivals were his keenest foes,  
 And warlike chieftains did his rule oppose:

With iron arm, as chief of that great land,  
 He smote them all and ruled with stern command.

This famous Prince, those recreant foes subdued,  
 The fair Matilda as fond lover woo'd :  
 His cousin she, for peerless beauty famed,  
 Tho' she hath been for deeds of vengeance blamed ;  
 Count Baldwin's daughter, he who proudly reigned  
 O'er fertile Flanders, and renown obtained.

At Eu's cathedral, blessings were pronounced,  
 And by great feasts these nuptials were announced.  
 This act was long by Pope and Priest withstood,  
 As not allowed between close ties of blood ;  
 And when proclaimed, an interdict was laid  
 Upon the realm, and priestly wrath displayed,  
 Till wise Lanfranc unfailing friendship proved,  
 And holy censures caused to be removed ;  
 For William ne'er would just obedience yield,  
 But stood resolved his wife and throne to shield.

At Rouen then Duke William held his court,  
 And thither Harold proudly did escort ;  
 There Princes, Prelates, Warriors had resort.  
 This royal abode could boast with truth and pride,  
 Of valiant knights in fields of honor tried ;  
 Of prelates grave who sacred charges filled,  
 And scholars learn'd, in lore of ages skilled ;  
 And there were Dames of noble, princely birth,  
 And famed alike for beauty and for worth.  
 That gorgeous palace shone on many a night,  
 Like fairy scene illumed with magic light :

Now at this court the Saxon nobles shared  
 A welcome greeting, well for them prepared.  
 Matilda still, as lovely as the morn,  
 Great William's wife, to fame and grandeur born,  
 With matchless beauty beaming from her face,  
 Shed o'er those scenes a pure and courtly grace :  
 A royal will her gestures each displayed,  
 While smiling words her loftier hopes betrayed ;  
 For not indifferent to her female mind,  
 Were the great schemes Duke William had designed.  
 There Judith too, in radiant beauty beamed,  
 And each surpassing, save Matilda, seemed.  
 Her soft, dark eye, her calm, self-conscious air,  
 Told of crushed hopes, of deep and long despair.  
 To greet her sister she to Rouen came ;  
 Their hearts were one, tho' not their hopes the same.  
 To Harold's brother Tostig she was wed,  
 And life of woe that lovely Princess led.  
 Tostig then ruled the far Northumbrian land,  
 With tyrant sway and a rapacious hand :  
 Her husband's perils long had Judith shared,  
 And for dark future was her soul prepared.  
 There too was Robert, William's first-born son,  
 Wild Rufus too, whose youth had scarce begun ;  
 And Adelize, young, lovely and sedate,  
 Whose blameless name is linked with Harold's fate.  
 And many more this humble page might name,  
 Who then adorned that court of knightly fame :  
 How each essayed, e'en female grace and art,  
 Their guests to please and win Prince Harold's heart.

My song might tell ; but the far stream of fate  
Bears darkly on, and mightier scenes await.

Amid rejoicings, splendors of that court,  
Fast fled the hours and passing seemed too short.  
His heart confiding, free from anxious thought,  
And that distrust the future too well taught,  
Prince Harold lingered with each Saxon knight,  
Thro' joy by day and revelry by night.  
The Norman Prince and his imperial bride,  
Their guests to win, had every art employed :  
Charms of friendship, blandishments of power,  
Their path beset and freely on them shower.  
Days thus had gone and they were feasting still,  
While William sought each hour with joy to fill.  
Oft Harold now his exiled brother sought,  
And Haco too, by early sorrow taught ;  
The child of Sweyn the outlaw long undone,  
Of great Earl Godwin the dishonored son.  
There to these kinsmen, plain as light of day,  
Appeared the dangers strewed in Harold's way ;  
And they forewarned, implored him to beware  
Of the great Norman and each hidden snare  
Which his dark wiles upon his path had spread,  
To sway him living, or secure him dead ;  
That heedless then within the reach he stood,  
Of watchful foe of strange and savage mood,  
Who would, like tiger, stealth and treachery bring,  
To aid his fury in the deadly spring :  
But Harold's high and valiant spirit bore  
Firm faith and courage to the Norman shore :

His hero's soul disdained to lend belief  
 In foul designs from so renowned a chief:  
 He nor suspicion, nor a fear had known,—  
 His mind too great, distrustful thoughts to own:  
 These words of Ulf, of Haco, he reproved,  
 And like a god, thro' all these perils moved.

The first bright days of summer now were gone,  
 And o'er the earth a richer glory shone:  
 The waving fields, the forest and the stream  
 Glowing with splendour of the golden beam;  
 The fragrant leaf on foliage-laden trees,  
 Breathing wild odors to the wand'ring breeze;  
 The teeming earth, the perfume of the flowers,  
 The songs of birds awakening with the hours  
 That bring the dawn to gild the Eastern skies;  
 And those sad notes, which, when the day-beam dies,  
 Thro' sacred twilight, sweet and undefiled,  
 Sing of lost hopes so rapturously wild,  
 They touch the soul like life's last dream of love,  
 Or raise the thoughts to holier worlds above;—  
 All lent enchantment to that radiant land,  
 Fertile and blest by nature's bounteous hand.  
 Rich, sweeping vales, in summer hues arrayed,  
 Fair, smiling landscapes, fruitful toil displayed;  
 Churches and spires appeared in distant view,  
 O'er regions wide where wealth and cities grew;  
 And feudal towers by many a mount arose,  
 For strong defence against relentless foes;  
 There castles old and lofty mansions stood,  
 The stately homes of men of Norman blood,

Who lived in splendor, swayed with high command  
 O'er all the borders of that mighty land :  
 Along the banks of rivers winding far,  
 Commerce had spread, despite the rage of war :  
 Well tilled the soil and fostered every art  
 With the strong impulse labor doth impart :  
 'Twas at this time that science, letters spread,  
 And o'er that realm a soft'ning influence shed.  
 The Church had grown beneath that sov'reign sway,  
 And blest the people with a brighter day.  
 So now all glorious in that distant time,  
 Shone this far-spreading and majestic clime,—  
 Another England growing by the deep,  
 Where some of Albion's great ancestors sleep.  
 The Celt, the Roman, Frank, were blended there.  
 Worn wrecks of nations wasted by despair ;  
 And o'er them all now ruled the Norman race,  
 Whose footsteps yet in wonder we may trace,—  
 The lasting impress man will ne'er efface :  
 Giants they were, for thoughts, for deeds renown'd,  
 In after times with matchless glory crown'd.  
 Thus days had pass'd ; at Rouen they remained,  
 By royal welcome, courteous arts, detained ;  
 And William then did earnestly entreat  
 The Saxon Prince and nobles of his suite,  
 Excursions thence thro' Normandy to make,  
 That gladly he would join them for his sake.  
 Soon all were ready, eager to depart,  
 Princes and courtiers, each with joyous heart.

A tour was made, the Norman their escort,  
With warlike chieftains, nobles of his court.  
In castle, abbey, fortress and in town,  
Harold was hailed as Prince of high renown ;  
And famed abodes they saw upon their way,  
And sacred fanes, untouched by time's decay.  
'Twere tedious here to trace the routes they went,  
Or close to follow on such wand'rings bent :  
Those days were passed in joyaunce and in glee,  
In banquets, hunts and feats of chivalry.

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## BOOK SECOND.

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### ARGUMENT.

Brief sketch of Brittany.—Its position and some account of the Dukes of that country, contemporaries of William of Normandy.—Hostility between the Britons and Normans.—The enmity between the two reigning houses of these powerful states.—Alain, Eudo, and Conan.—Cause of the war between William and the latter stated.—Commencement of the struggle.—Harold and the Saxon nobles join William in the campaign, and swear oaths of fealty to him at Avranches.—Substance of the oath given.—William joins the main army on the River Cōfsnon.—Engagements briefly described.—Heroic conduct of Harold, who rescues a large body of the Normans from destruction in the sands of the Cōfsnon.—Progress and termination of the campaign shortly narrated.—Visit of William and Harold to Mont St. Michel.—Night-scene between them described.—The proposals of William, and the astonishment of Harold at William's disclosure of his views.—The Saxon comes under serious promises and engagements to the Norman Prince.—The following day they return to Avranches, and thence they proceed onward to Bayeux, passing through Granville, Coutances, St. Lo, and other towns.—Their arrival at Bayeux.

UPON the frontiers of the Norman state,  
A region lay, renowned from ancient date;  
Its natives rude, but great in martial fame,  
In times remote, Armoricans by name.  
Both to their country and their princes true,  
Since ages gone, their varied fortunes grew.  
By Romans, Franks, and long by Britons held,  
These last by arms had sov'reign sway upheld.



Dark realm of storms which lash its western shore,  
 Far round the coast fierce ocean tempests roar,  
 And Brittany, the later name it bore.  
 Great streams, high mountains and far-stretching plains,  
 And cities rich in all that toil sustains ;—  
 Its limits changing in the turns of war,  
 Now closing near, and then receding far ;—  
 Annals defaced, oft stained by many a crime,  
 Had marked that land thro' a long lapse of time.  
 From Albion's isle the earlier Britons came,  
 And here had found a country and a home ;—  
 A kingdom formed, had made efficient laws,  
 And their career had won the world's applause.  
 Since that proud day when Rollo at St. Clair,  
 His claim enforced to many a region fair ;  
 And Charles of France such vast concessions made,  
 That the dark wave of conquest might be stayed,  
 A struggle long and bloody had ensued,  
 Between the Britons, ever unsubdued,  
 And the dread Northmen, whose rapacious power,  
 Their shores had sought in its triumphant hour :  
 Still on their frontier wasting contests rose,  
 And years had passed, and passing, left them foes.  
 The Ducal chiefs who long that sceptre swayed,  
 Tho' oft to deeds of wrath and wrong betrayed,  
 Were famous warriors, tried on many a field,  
 And ne'er would fealty to the Norman yield.  
 Thro' female line, they could their lineage trace,  
 In far descent from Rollo's sov'reign race :

And tho' those proud and warlike Princes stood  
 In close relations by the ties of blood,  
 They had, as rivals, waged revengeful war,  
 And thro' dark times did fierce resentment share.  
 William and Conan in ambition vied,  
 To which deep hate its venom all supplied :  
 For when Duke Robert with a noble band,  
 As pilgrim journeyed to the Holy Land,  
 Fair Herlève's child, of father's care bereft,  
 With Duke Alain of Brittany was left.  
 Prince Robert died : the child he did retain,  
 And sought by fraud his sceptre to obtain :  
 Faithless he proved to Robert's youthful heir,  
 And vassals roused to wage rebellious war.  
 At Val des Dunes, last conflict and defeat  
 Young William's foes, at length, were doomed to meet.  
 Ere this, Alain had perished, it is said,  
 By Norman hand which many a wrong repaid.  
 An only son, when he was gone, remained,  
 Conan his name, who future glory gained :  
 By birth the heir to Brittany's great throne,  
 These sov'reign rights his kinsmen did disown.  
 Eudo his uncle was his guardian named,  
 But fell ambition had his mind inflamed :  
 This sacred trust the traitor soon betrayed,  
 And 'gainst his charge had foul intent displayed.  
 To man's estate the youthful Conan grew,  
 And by his arms this treach'rous Prince o'erthrew.  
 In his designs tho' Eudo thus had failed,  
 He on Duke William by false words prevailed,

Aggressive war to wage against the land  
 Which Conan ruled with stern and just command :  
 Thenceforth the Norman had irruptions made,  
 And leagues around in ruin then were laid.

In wrath Duke Conan promptly took the field,  
 These foes to quell who thus to arms appealed ;  
 And to the limits of their rival lands,  
 This patriot Prince soon led his hostile bands.  
 Beyond the stream called Coësnon in the west,  
 Upon the Britons the invaders press'd.  
 But these assailed, o'erthrown with dire defeat,  
 Were routed, slaughtered in forlorn retreat :  
 Onward advancing, Conan's legions still  
 With dread alarms did all that region fill.  
 William aroused, and threatened from afar,  
 Fresh troops had levied for that distant war :  
 His princely vassals gave him willing aid,  
 And in his cause their martial zeal displayed :  
 Heroic levies, with allegiance true,  
 And valiant chieftains, to his standard flew.

In this campaign the Saxon nobles joined,  
 With ardor bold, and posts of honor found ;  
 Their daring spirits loved the pomp of war,  
 And longed the rapture of the strife to share :  
 The voice of fame was music to the ear,  
 The souls of men who held renown so dear.  
 By their adhesion to the Norman cause,  
 They won from William favor and applause.  
 That subtle Prince, with keen, perfidious mind,  
 By feudal oath, those chieftains sought to bind.

At fair Avranches a court of arms was held,  
 Whose stately forms in splendor far excelled  
 The solemn pageants of each former scene,  
 Where honored knighthood oft conferred had been.  
 'Brothers in Arms' that league for life was called,  
 And in those rights here Harold was installed.

"From this day forth to thee I fealty bear,  
 While I have life; firm faith to thee I swear;  
 Thro' weal, thro' woe, I pledge my word to thee,  
 As loyal knight; so be thou true to me."

To the great chief these formal words addressed,  
 Of that allegiance, all the truth expressed.  
 There princely nobles, Normans, Saxons too,  
 But chiefly Harold, signal notice drew,  
 In that proud throng of gay, illustrious men,  
 Of warlike chieftains, all assembled then.  
 This loyal oath they swore upon that day,  
 'Mid all the courtly, chivalrous array,  
 Which in those times, the loftiest rank might claim  
 In courts of arms, when joined with martial fame.  
 Again had Harold fatally displayed  
 That trust too blind, all cruelly betrayed:  
 He step by step, thro' each ill-fated hour,  
 Became sure victim to the Norman's power:  
 Tho' little import oath of fealty bore,  
 Yet knightly faith he thus to William swore;  
 An act unseemly in a Prince so great,  
 The future guardian of proud England's fate.  
 The Norman Prince, for warlike deeds prepared,  
 With re-inforcements to the field repaired.

The Britons posted on the Coësnon's banks,  
 Await the conflict with embattled ranks.  
 Those rival states that river did divide,  
 And by it long their frontiers did abide.  
 Near the right bank the Norman legions halt,  
 Where all are marshalled for the dread assault.  
 There of the whole, elite of all the land,  
 The warlike William takes supreme command.  
 In three divisions he his force divides,  
 And both the wings to vet'ran skill confides.  
 The left despatched to pass the stream above,  
 Is on that flank to make decisive move ;  
 The other ordered to cross o'er below,  
 Is on the right to strike a fatal blow.

Himself the centre as reserve obeys,  
 Where all his skill and foresight he displays.  
 With him was Harold and each Saxon knight,  
 All prompt to act, to swell the coming fight.

The ebbing tide in Coësnon's tranquil stream,  
 Vast shores hath left where sands of ocean gleam :  
 The sluggish channel in its shallow course,  
 Yields passage easy to the Norman force.  
 With rapid march the adverse strand they reach,  
 And stand arrayed upon the winding beach.  
 In ranks they form, to each assault advance,  
 With sword, with shield and the unerring lance.  
 Hugh d'Avranches, a chief of great command,  
 A famous soldier of the Norman land,  
 With sword of flame and seldom known to halt,  
 Leads one division to the dread assault ;

While great Montgomm'rie, long renowned in war,  
 Did to the left with all his force repair.  
 With dauntless valor, Conan doth oppose  
 Compact battalions to these mighty foes :  
 Firmly he holds the river's adverse bank,  
 In front resists, and smites on either flank.  
 Then hand to hand, in conflict's close array,  
 Those chiefs of fame their warlike skill display.  
 Here valiant Britons the high banks defend,  
 There in pursuit some on the shore descend ;  
 D'Avranches here urges each advance, attack,  
 While Conan there repels and hurls them back :  
 They join the combat, furious charge the foe,  
 Where battle rages on the beach below.  
 Along the bank on the far-stretching shore,  
 The carnage deepens in that wild uproar.  
 The valiant Normans each defence assail,  
 But all their fury can o'er none prevail,  
 For Conan's troops, with strong entrenchments round,  
 By matchless valor firmly keep their ground.  
 And bright the fame which on that field they won,  
 Tho' on this page their deeds may not be shown ;  
 Since many a chieftain, warring on that day,  
 Thro' darker hour will mightier deeds display.  
 In slow retreat, at length the Normans yield,  
 Then in disorder hurry o'er the field :  
 Pursued and slaughtered, welt'ring in their gore,  
 Their broken ranks the foe resist no more.  
 O'er William's host destruction now in pends,  
 For there a flat before them wide extends ;

And soon these troops, involved in treach'rous sands,  
 The charge sustain of Conan's furious bands :  
 They turn, they struggle, show their wrath in vain,  
 Where bogs and quagmires stretch far o'er the plain ;  
 Whole squadrons sink and thousands too are slain.

While this repulse is on the right sustained,  
 Upon the left the Britons still maintained  
 Firm ground despite the fury of the foe,  
 And rank on rank had headlong hurled below.  
 Tho' fierce assault Montgomm'rie there had made,  
 Tho' valiant deeds his Normans had displayed,  
 By dauntless arms, heroic valor met,  
 They fled repulsed in bloody, dire defeat.  
 To their support Duke William had repaired,  
 With strong reserve, and all their peril shared.  
 A force he left to Harold's sure command,  
 With Norman knights, and his own Saxon band,  
 D'Avranches to aid, should he too fail to gain  
 Complete success, or a defeat sustain.  
 This chief still struggles 'gainst o'erwhelming force,  
 While in the sands, both infantry and horse  
 Are deep involved, and wild disorder grows,  
 Before the steel of his avenging foes.  
 Prince Harold eager, hastens to relieve,  
 Ere all the Britons their entrenchments leave ;  
 And down the bank, from the opposing heights,  
 Prompt to the rescue rush the Saxon knights.  
 Brave Normans follow ; quick the stream passed o'er,  
 They fiercely charge along that blood-stained shore.

Great Harold leads them through that fatal scene,  
 And ne'er more dreadful in grim war had been.  
 Like fiery bolt descending from the cloud,  
 Or the first wave of ocean's tidal flood,  
 Or the fell sweep of the Sirocco's breath,  
 He hurls his squadrons on the ranks of death.  
 His mighty arm spreads carnage on his path;  
 The Britons halt, recoil before his wrath.  
 The struggling Normans, soon the Saxon's care,  
 Were rescued, saved, tho' many perished there.  
 These shattered forces, Harold at their head,  
 Quick rallying now against the foe were led.  
 The bloody conflict, slaughter on that shore,  
 Left heaps of dead 'mid crimson pools of gore.  
 To their defences fast the Britons fled,  
 Leaving to fate their dying and the dead.

The fiery Norman with reserves had sought  
 The fatal spot where great Montgomm'rie fought,  
 Then rallying quick his routed forces there,  
 For fresh assault he fiercely doth prepare.  
 Onward he leads, dread warriors by his side,  
 And backward rolls the battle's bloody tide.  
 The strife, the carnage on that death-strewed shore  
 Were ruthless, ghastly, such as ne'er before  
 Between the Normans and the Britons rose  
 Since they were warring as relentless foes.  
 While round the Norman thicker conflict grew,  
 A giant Briton, tow'ring to the view,  
 With gesture furious and with lurid eye,  
 His arm aloft, his battle-axe on high,



Toward the Prince, in search of deathless fame,  
 O'er heaps of slain on bounding charger came.  
 The Duke quick saw the Briton's fell intent  
 And to the combat all his fury bent.  
 Fierce in their wrath, and plunging o'er the slain,  
 These mighty champions shook the gory plain :  
 In wild uproar, the conflict raged around,  
 And horses, men lay scattered o'er the ground.  
 Duke William's charger, rearing o'er the dead,  
 By mortal blow was struck upon the head  
 From battle-axe that Briton wielded well,  
 And with his rider, reeling back he fell.  
 But William's arm had dealt a deadlier blow,  
 Which dashed the giant to the sands below :  
 Full on the helmet smote the iron mace,  
 Crushed in the skull, and mangled all the face :  
 One dying groan, then fled the vital breath,  
 And his dark spirit sought the realms of death.  
 One to the Duke, the Briton's charger brings,  
 He with a bound into the saddle springs :  
 Still on he leads amid the battle's roar,  
 To each defence they had assailed before ;  
 Then with a rush assailing from below,  
 The Britons break, retreat before the foe :  
 From each entrenchment falling to the rear,  
 That line along, defeated they appear.  
 The Norman now did all his force combine,  
 Which slow advanced in firm and dreadful line.  
 The Britons then a backward movement made,  
 Yet fierce resistance in retreat displayed ;

They halt, reform, confront their ruthless foes,  
And to the onset dauntless arms oppose.  
On sloping ground, proud ranks in deep array,  
Await th' assailants near the close of day.  
These warlike hosts in headlong fury meet,  
Alternate vanquish and sustain defeat :  
The valiant Conan, young yet skilled in war,  
Bounds o'er the field, each peril then to share :  
Charges are made, fierce combats lost and won,  
And each in turn, seems vanquished and undone,  
And Conan's charger bore him thro' the fray,  
Where many a warrior fell upon that day :  
His fiery courage, 'mid the battle's roar,  
That Princely youth through scenes of carnage bore.  
Inured to arms on many a bloody field,  
To few did he in daring valor yield ;  
By few was he in strength of arm excelled ;  
Nor in dread war was nobler chief beheld.  
A distant page in this long lay will show  
The mournful doom which laid young Conan low :  
How early death eclipsed his splendid name,  
And cut him off from hopes of brighter fame.  
But slight advantage could the Normans claim,  
Tho' great their deeds and high their martial fame.  
Duke William, Harold foremost oft were seen  
Where the worst storm of battle's shock had been.  
In bloody conflicts, closely side by side,  
These chiefs renowned did thro' the battle ride.  
Borne on his barb, conspicuous to the sight,  
The warlike Norman sought the thickest fight ;

While Harold, eager, fierce and valiant too,  
 With mighty arm opposing hosts o'erthrew.  
 They smote in front, on flank, and in the rear,  
 And spread destruction thro' the ranks of war.  
 These men renowned, unmatched, unrivalled stood  
 In strength and valor on that field of blood,  
 But none would yield while there was hope or life,  
 So night, at length, descended on their strife.  
 Then slept those hosts beneath the midnight star,  
 While brightly blazed their bivouac fires afar.  
 The following morn they doubtful war renew,  
 Tho' fainter now the wasting contest grew.  
 Tho' changing tactics prove their warlike skill,  
 The fate of war is undecided still.

Weary in time both Normans, Britons grew ;  
 And peace those chiefs were eager to renew :  
 Faint waxed their strife, and then a truce ensued :  
 The contest ceased and prompt a league was made.  
 By it Duke William, Pontorson had gained,  
 And his possession long that town remained.  
 William and Harold in those times appeared  
 By cordial brotherhood yet more endeared :  
 And when no more the din of battle rose,  
 Together oft those Princes sought repose ;  
 One tent they shared, in recreation joined,  
 And rare could friendship like to theirs be found :  
 Discourse they held, of youth and youthful days,  
 Of warlike deeds and bards' poetic lays :  
 O'er all the land had gone Prince Harold's fame,  
 And bright the halo round his mighty name ;

His princely soul and matchless beauty won  
 The love of all, roused jealousy in none.  
 And still he lingered 'mid each joyous scene,  
 Tho' far too long his sojourn there had been ;  
 Yet signs he saw which warned him to beware,  
 To break from all that made him loiter there.  
 He pleads, entreats, solicits day by day,  
 His leave to take and hasten on his way ;  
 And William yielding, yields but to betray ;  
 For unfulfilled were the great Norman's schemes,  
 Tho' still to Harold frank and free he seems.  
 But 'tis not thus the Saxon must depart ;  
 Dark hope concealed fills that ambitious heart.  
 Hence he proposed, that joined by many more,  
 He should escort him to the Northern shore,  
 Whence Harold's sail should seek his native land,  
 And bid adieu to that ill-fated strand.  
 'Twas soon agreed that journey should be made,  
 With Norman guards and chiefs of highest grade.  
 The camp they leave, and all the toils of war,  
 And travel on and mutual friendship share :  
 The fair Avranches, a town of ancient name,  
 They joyful reach, and there a halt proclaim.  
 Near to Avranches and upward to the skies,  
 The lonely heights of Mont St. Michel rise :  
 That rocky isle in Cancale's gloomy bay,  
 Vast o'er the deep thro' many a vanished day,  
 Had long withstood the waste of Earth's decay.  
 Two thousand years of sunshine and of storm  
 Had not impaired its grand and mystic form :

There first the Druid, then the Roman taught  
 Their sacred rites, with pagan error fraught :  
 By time, by conquest these were swept away,  
 To be replaced by lights of brighter day.  
 There at that time and from a distant age,  
 An Abbey rose, abode of many a sage :  
 There royal pilgrims, hermits sought repose,  
 And at its shrine had breathed immortal woes :  
 Around that fane, traditions dim and old  
 Dark tales had spread, this page may not unfold.  
 Upon those heights that sacred structure stood,  
 And midway down, long known for deeds of blood  
 In later times, a dismal dungeon frowned,  
 Where noble victims broken hearts had found :  
 There perished youth, the beautiful, the brave ;  
 There laurelled names had found the maniac's grave ;  
 There lonely grief, thro' wild despair by day,  
 And night's pale dreams, had worn life's hopes away.  
 That Abbey still in ruined grandeur stands,  
 High o'er that scene, long famed in distant lands,  
 And from its walls, so far as eye can see,  
 Lie broad to view the realms of Normandy ;  
 While more remote, by mountain and o'er plain,  
 Rise the proud homes of Brittany and Maine ;  
 And far to sea and scattered, tho' in sight,  
 Are smaller isles of less imposing height.  
 The vap'ry clouds which often gather there,  
 Give to that region a mysterious air  
 Of nameless gloom, oft heightened by the roar  
 Of ocean's wrath upon that sterile shore.

That sacred spot had claimed Duke William's care,  
Who wisely sought its splendor to repair.  
An Abbé learned he named some years before,  
Whose rigid rule was promptly to restore  
Religious order to these priestly men,  
Who in by-paths too far had wandered then.  
Roget the name that famous Abbé bore,  
Of noble birth, of deep and varied lore.

Reposing thus so near that mountain isle,  
A visit there the Duke proposed the while ;  
Strange scene it was, and curious to behold,  
Of wide renown from troubled times of old :  
Thence to survey, as far as reach of eye,  
The wondrous regions which around it lay ;  
To view that dungeon, kneel before that shrine,  
One dark with woes, one breathing hopes divine,  
To Harold seemed, in soft and thoughtful mood,  
A place to see, with interest deep imbued.  
'Twas early autumn, and the tinted skies  
Stretched far on high their gorgeous canopies ;  
And nature's glory, fading at that time,  
With sadder hues o'erspread that ocean clime.  
So the great Prince, with a confiding heart,  
To William yields and straightway they depart.  
The Isle they reach as the last golden ray  
Of cloudless sunset, marks the close of day.  
The monks received them on that island shore,  
And eager welcome to the Norman bore.  
Prince Harold too was greeted as a guest  
Of the great Duke, and as his friend address'd.

The Abbé walked the mighty chiefs between,  
 Who, in ascending, lingered o'er that scene.  
 Some gathered round, some followed close behind,  
 As up the mountain still their steps inclined.  
 Slowly they gained the vast and rocky height,  
 Where they were both besought to pass the night.  
 The Dukes comply and cheerfully prepare  
 For sober diet, and the vesper prayer.  
 Of frugal cheer they sparingly partake,  
 And hours are passed in grave and friendly talk.  
 Now on the summit, round the mountain's brow,  
 And o'er the waves which laved the rocks below,  
 A pathway led along the dizzy height,  
 A winding way receding from the sight.  
 Hewn in the rock, unworn it still appears,  
 Tho' trod by footsteps of a thousand years.  
 In early days Duke William there had been ;  
 His eye had dwelt upon that wondrous scene,  
 Ere youth's unclouded summer suns had set,  
 Now gone for him, tho' well remembered yet.  
 Alone those chiefs went forth at solemn hour,  
 Along that path until they reached a tower,  
 An ancient tower, upon the rocky steep,  
 And from far ages looking o'er the deep :  
 Around its basement many a fragment lay,  
 For time had worn its strong defence away.  
 There they sat down in dusky shades of night,  
 And Harold musing gazed upon that sight.  
 All earth was still, nor cloud in the far skies,  
 While lingering there, they saw the moon arise,

And o'er the world diffuse her tender ray,  
 Beneath whose light old, slumb'ring ocean lay ;  
 The sighing winds were sinking to their sleep,  
 Lulled in soft cradles of the silvery deep ;  
 The wand'ring waves dashed on the rocks no more,  
 But broke in murmurs round the sea-beat shore ;  
 Bright twinkling stars were sinking in the west,  
 Those silent worlds where men have hoped for rest :  
 And like the splendor of some Eastern clime,  
 A soft repose hung o'er that scene sublime :  
 There, 'mid the silence of that tranquil hour,  
 When dim o'er all dwelt night's mysterious power,  
 Great William sat, with anxious thought oppressed,  
 And thus at length Prince Harold he addressed :  
 " Harold, my guest, nor less my friend thou art,  
 And ere thou goest, to thee I would impart  
 A solemn secret which affects our fate ;  
 One thou shouldst know before it prove too late :  
 'Tween us henceforth a lasting league should be ;  
 In thee I trust ; place thou thy faith in me.  
 When Edward sojourned at the Norman court,  
 His home selected for a long resort,  
 Oft he declared (and then his thoughts were free)  
 That should he e'er his native country see,  
 And gain that throne which then so distant seemed,  
 Though of that throne by day and night he dreamed,  
 He would remember the great debt he bore  
 To me his friend,—his friend and something more :



And oft he spoke of the great claims I'd won  
 To his regard for acts of kindness done.  
 And later too, perchance thou art aware,  
 He has proclaimed that I should be his heir :  
 He his affection at his court displayed,  
 And me assured that his decree was made ;  
 That feeble Edgar, though the next to reign,  
 Could ne'er the sceptre of your kings maintain  
 O'er races proud, divided and too free,  
 And hence his crown must soon devolve on me.  
 That great event may now be drawing nigh ;  
 Be frank with me ; can I on thee rely ?"

As the great Norman did these hopes declare,  
 Each fatal word fell cold on Harold's ear :  
 Regret, surprise, amazement and dismay  
 Did each in turn the hero's spirit sway.  
 King Edward's warning smote upon his heart,  
 And those forebodings Ulf would oft impart.  
 With vivid light now flashed upon his view  
 The Norman's guile, all then, alas ! too true !  
 To such demand what answer could he make ?  
 What path was near which he could safely take ?  
 'Twere vain, he deemed, consent now to refuse,  
 And yet too base, a traitor's course to chose.  
 Assent withheld, a dungeon did await  
 Him thus entrapped,—perchance a darker fate.  
 So well Duke William had each thought concealed :  
 That not till now was this great hope revealed,  
 When he had made him famous thro' the land,  
 And that night's meeting carefully had plann'd ;

Before a crime he would not now recede,  
 Nor fail such scheme to crown with cruel deed.  
 Could he consent and thus his life enthrall,  
 Or could he later such great pledge recall ?  
 Still for his brother did the Saxon fear,  
 That brother loved, and Haco held so dear.  
 Thus for himself and still for time to gain,  
 And for these kinsmen their release obtain,  
 He calmly spoke, but spoke with falt'ring thought,  
 And by these words a weak evasion sought :

" An oath of fealty I to thee have sworn ;  
 And will repeat the pledge which it hath borne,  
 In words, in form, thou mayst from me command,  
 To make that promise public through the land.  
 Beyond that oath I must not, dare not go,  
 Nor closer alliance with a Norman show :  
 To that extent my friendship I'll declare,—  
 To that extent thy plans and hopes I share.  
 To promise more would be a crime in me ;  
 And more to ask would be a fault in thee."

The Norman Duke intently Harold eyed,  
 And then to him thus artfully replied :

" My noble Harold, that would be no more  
 Than the knight's oath thy chieftains freely swore.  
 If to that oath, we should another add,  
 That thou my daughter Adelize wouldst wed,  
 And let thy sister be betrothed by me  
 To some great noble of supreme degree :  
 And promise further, in most sacred form,  
 (This great compact and union to confirm,)

Thou wouldst receive me on the English shore,  
 And aid my cause when Edward is no more :—  
 This would be just, would firmly us unite,  
 Success secure by our resistless might ;  
 This from our path each peril would efface,  
 And save from war thy great and cherished race :  
 For my resolve is to achieve my aim,  
 To gain that throne, or leave a deathless name.  
 This I'll pursue, from every fear exempt,  
 In this prevail, or die in the attempt.  
 On this reflect, and let thine answer be,  
 For England, hope, for union too with me."

Long Harold mused ; when he that silence broke,  
 All calmly thus the Norman he bespoke :  
 " Prince, if adding to the oath I swore,  
 I would declare, when Edward is no more,  
 Thy claims in council I will not oppose,  
 Should great debate about the crown arise ;  
 And if their king the nation should elect,  
 Free from my influence, thee they may select ;  
 And should their choice then justly on thee fall,  
 Thou'lt find me faithful, prompt at thy great call :  
 Would not such oath prove all thou couldst exact,  
 Could I do more, and not my word retract ?  
 But Edgar still is England's rightful heir,  
 And he succeeding I am free as air.  
 My knightly word do thou as frankly take,  
 Besides the oath I publicly will make :  
 If thus indeed thou wishest me to swear,  
 Declare the day, the sanction, words, and where.

To thee alone I further promise give—  
 Be this concealed while thou and I shall live—  
 I'll yield thee truly all the aid I can,  
 And will suggest, may name thee as the man  
 Whom England should select, and thee alone,  
 To fill with glory Edward's vacant throne.  
 I promise too, thy daughter to espouse,  
 As honored wife ; my sister to dispose  
 On some great noble of the Norman land,  
 Whom she shall wed at thy free choice, command.  
 Thus far I go to meet, great Prince, thy prayer,  
 Tho' late declared ; no more may Saxon dare."

The crafty Norman silent then remained,  
 Till mildly thus to Harold he complained :  
 " Thou dost distrust me, tho' in candor still  
 To thee all freely I declare my will.  
 More friendly zeal I thought thou wouldst display,  
 And leave me grateful to a later day.  
 But as thou say'st, so let our compact be ;  
 Unfailing friend thou'lt ever find in me.  
 In my great council, summoned at Bayeux,  
 Thine oath pronounce and be its promise true !"

In William's projects Harold thus concurred,  
 Consenting feebly and with heedless word.  
 Oh, better far had the great hero died,  
 Than act a part where honor could not guide.  
 Had he a high and firm resolve maintained,  
 And his great part of Saxon Prince sustained ;  
 Had he stern answer of a patriot made,  
 Nor at that hour such anxious fears betrayed ;

Had he repelled with calm and cold rebuke  
 Th' insidious offers of the Norman Duke,  
 That Prince perchance, all ruthless as he proved,  
 Had been with awe at Harold's grandeur moved.  
 Perchance that oath which darkened his career,  
 Would not like shadow on his fame appear.  
 So weakness first invades the human heart,  
 And by degrees subdues each nobler part,  
 Till all enthralled, we wander to and fro,  
 Lest in wild paths which end in nameless woe.  
 Some lofty minds resist the first approach,  
 And ne'er permit to enter, or encroach,  
 That which, admitted, makes its ready way,  
 Clouds the bright soul and leads the heart astray.  
 Yet proudest children of our race unblest  
 Are those, alas! of yielding souls possess'd :  
 Man's strength is weakness, and the loudest scorn  
 For those who fall oft meets a doom forlorn.  
 'Tis midnight now ; dark clouds shut out the moon,  
 And the soft glories of the sky are gone.  
 Silence reigns there ; the weird repose of night,  
 And gloomy shades invest that lonely height.  
 Short time they linger'd, Harold's promise made,  
 While cold distrust they mutually betrayed.  
 The hour has come and they at length depart,  
 And future fate weighed heavy on each heart.  
 Soft sleep came not, tho' its repose they sought ;  
 For great their cares and keen each anxious thought.  
 William's vast schemes, with fell intent combined,  
 Now banished rest from his ambitious mind :

Dread thoughts, deep anguish visit Harold's brain,  
 And hope's sweet sleep can never come again.  
 There, king and country, perils yet to come ;—  
 Here, his own freedom and his kinsmen's doom :  
 His friendship, honor cruelly betrayed ;  
 Of all, himself he chiefly must upbraid.

The tints of dawn were in the Eastern skies  
 Ere sorrow's sleep had closed Prince Harold's eyes.  
 That day they leave and seek Avranches once more ;  
 Thence they depart toward another shore.  
 Tho' William sought the Saxon still to sway,  
 Yet slight discourse they held upon the way.  
 Encompassed now by a resistless power,  
 His sorrow deepened thro' each passing hour ;  
 But then he promised and evaded still,  
 With dubious accents and a wavering will.  
 Granville they reach, a fortress by the sea,  
 A spot as fair as eye of man may see :  
 The lofty heights which look upon the deep,  
 The waves of ocean from the city keep :  
 Known then it was, as it was famed of old,  
 For women beautiful and of matchless mould.  
 One night is passed, and then Coutances they seek,  
 Which having gained another halt they make.  
 Coutances had been a seat of Roman power,  
 Of warlike strength in her triumphant hour.  
 There Flavian legions long and well withstood  
 Barbarian conquest both by land and flood.  
 There dwelt Helena, mourning by that shore,  
 Constantius there the Cæsar's laurel wore.

His bride, the scion of a humbler race,  
Knew from Constantius woman's last disgrace.  
She must not share proud Rome's imperial throne,  
Yet from afar, of her immortal son,  
Beheld the glory which thro' many an age  
Hath lived and glowed on fame's illumined page;  
And the renown of Constantine the Great  
Sheds hallowed light upon a mother's fate.  
Thence to St. Lo they wend their easy way,  
Which place was reached on the succeeding day.  
At length the towers of dark-famed Bayeux  
Rose to the sight, low in the distant view.  
Still kindness, court'sy beam on William's brow  
As they approach that scene of Harold's woe:  
To that great castle all repair in state,  
Where one foul deed soon clouded Harold's fate:  
Within those walls as prisoner he must stay,  
While in suspense he waits the coming day.

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## BOOK THIRD.

### ARGUMENT.

Meeting of the National Council of Normandy at Bayeux.—Harold's appearance before it.—The shrine and the oath.—His discovery of the deception of which he is made the victim by the treachery of the Duke of Normandy.—His anguish of mind on becoming aware that he had sworn on holy relics.—The adjournment of the Council, and subsequent interview between William and Harold.—Speeches of both.—The banquet afterwards, and the departure of Harold for England.

In council now, the Lords of Normandy,  
Proud chieftains of a warlike chivalry ;  
Men of deep thought and holy prelates too,  
Assembled were, by edict, at Bayeux.  
By promise bound, by force, came Harold there,  
An awful oath, with solemn rights to swear.  
To vast designs, to William's hopes of fame,  
Harold thus lent the glory of his name :—  
Oh, fatal act ! accursed and baneful hour  
Which gave the Saxon to the Norman's power :  
He by that oath, to his great foe resigned  
His freedom, honor and best hopes combined.  
A deed of woe, of dire and dreadful note,  
Which on his fame destructive treason brought ;  
Thence England's fall—her doom thro' coming years,  
The wrath of conquest, and a nation's tears.  
In royal state, with naked sword in hand,  
Begirt by ensigns of supreme command,



High William sat : hard by, Prince Harold stood,  
 And with him warriors of the Saxon blood.  
 His brother Ulf, the nephew whom he loved,  
 Close by his side, that fatal act reprov'd.  
 These brothers oft along the Thames had strayed,  
 In their young days, and on its banks had played :  
 Eventful years their love had not impaired,  
 And hopeless now, each other's pangs they shared.  
 On William's right, and marked to public view,  
 Proud Odo sat, the Bishop of Bayeux :  
 A favored Prince—the same whose public crimes  
 His brother saw—rebuked in after times ;  
 And near his sov'reign, but below the throne,  
 In counsel deep, stood great Lanfranc alone.  
 Long held in honor by the Norman Prince,  
 Could one so good his sanction thus evince,  
 Of wrongful deed, perfidiously designed,  
 And darkly prompted by some daring mind ?  
 On loftier names 'tis needless here to dwell,  
 A later record will proclaim them well :  
 Men of renown and valor stood that day  
 Before their chief in proud and bright array ;  
 Sedate their mien, and calm each high-born eye.  
 Could they behold Prince Harold's agony,  
 The gloomy brow which spoke a sense of shame,  
 Of treason branded on a mighty name,  
 Without regret, perchance reproach, that he,  
 Of tyrant force, the victim thus should be ?  
 'Tis said that some had warned him when too late,  
 Of what they feared might prove his cruel fate :

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Yet Princes, Priests, and men of thought profound,  
 In odious deed, by William thus were bound ;  
 Nor could the glories which they proudly won,  
 Gild the foul wrong which perfidy had done.

Before the nobles of the land had yet  
 Within that hall in solemn council met,  
 The Duke had caused (oh, base and fatal thought !)  
 The bones of saints, in secret, to be brought.  
 There in a shrine, concealed by cloth of gold,  
 In many a fragment lay these relics cold :  
 Upon the cloth two caskets rare were placed,  
 On which some words mysterious could be traced.  
 These smaller shrines, adorned with precious stones,  
 As symbols stood, unsanctified with bones.  
 No sacred object met the Saxon's eye,  
 That could suspicion of a fraud supply ;  
 William's friendship—still more that solemn scene,  
 Those princely men, deception could not mean ;  
 And holy prelates who their sanction gave  
 To that assembly of the wise, the brave,  
 Would each declare, what all alike beheld,  
 That his assent by force was there compelled.  
 Constrained to swear, such oath could never bind ;  
 So Harold deemed, and sternly stood resigned.

All now assembled in long order stand,  
 And calmly there await that chief's command :  
 With courteous word to all the nobles nigh,  
 While round the hall he casts a monarch's eye,  
 Enjoined they are appointed seats to take,  
 That Harold might new oath of fealty make :

These silent sat ; and then the Norman chief,  
 In accents mild, in words precise and brief,  
 From his proud seat, the breathless silence broke,  
 To Harold turned and thus impressive spoke :

“ Illustrious Harold, Prince of far renown,  
 Our loyal friendship to the world is known ;  
 And in our presence all these Princes greet  
 Our coming here, thy fealty to repeat.  
 Warriors renowned, grave prelates, as you see,  
 Men known to fame and all of high degree,  
 By me convoked, with willing minds appear,  
 To do thee honor, and thy words to hear ;  
 A solemn oath which I will not decline,  
 Before our God and on that holy shrine.  
 With this intent thy promise I receive,  
 That Normans, Saxons henceforth may believe,  
 And ever prize, a league thus freely made,  
 That my just cause thou faithfully wilt aid.  
 So thou dost swear, when Edward is no more,  
 Thou wilt receive me on the English shore ;  
 Assist my purpose to ascend the throne,  
 Oppose all others and their claims disown :  
 Thus bound by oath, our interests still require,  
 (Bright hopes for thee such wishes now inspire,)  
 That thou to wife, young Adelize shouldst take,  
 And give thy sister to the choice I make.”

Harold arose with gesture of surprise,  
 At oath so dread, now claimed without disguise :  
 With kindling anger he the Norman eyed,  
 And promptly then, though calmly, thus replied :

" Illustrious Prince, such promise I have made  
 To you alone, ah ! would it were unsaid !  
 That secret pledge I frankly must admit :  
 Yet thus to swear, can honor now permit ?  
 An oath so grave becomes alone the free,  
 And if constrained, can it as binding be ?  
 Your friendship, Prince, I would not here disown,  
 Nor yet your court'sy, nor your great renown ;  
 But to my country and my king is due,  
 A higher faith than can be claimed by you :  
 And if repugnance in this act I show,  
 'Tis to declare, protest, that duty now  
 This oath condemns, reproves such pledge of mine,  
 Which to foul treason would my life consign.  
 Compulsion, prince, my actions may control,  
 But darkest dangers shall not sway my soul :  
 The mind, at least, from all coercion free,  
 'Midst present perils all unstained shall be.  
 This protest hear, before these nobles made,  
 Mark well the words in which it is conveyed :—  
 Should this dread vow against me be invoked,  
 By this reserve all sanction stands revoked :  
 But thus betrayed, my promise I confirm,  
 And this great oath will swear in solemn form."

Thus Harold spoke. The Duke no answer made,  
 But turned to Odo, with a look which said,—  
 Obey my orders—promptly let it be ;  
 Receive the oath and leave the rest to me.

From his high place came Odo forth alone,  
 Prince Harold sought, and spoke in whispered tone ;

Then led the way, the Saxon by his side,  
 Towards the altar for the oath supplied.  
 Lanfranc, the monk, close followed in their train,  
 With mien composed, and mind that could restrain  
 Those princely vassals, and their chief could sway  
 In all his pride, and teach him to obey.  
 With solemn step across that stately hall,  
 Alone they went; the Saxon Prince, withal,  
 His fame to blight before those princely men,  
 While looks of wrath, defiance gather'd then,  
 In his blue eye and on his lofty brow,  
 Since he a victim to the Norman now,  
 To sterner will and darkest fate must bow.  
 The spot he reached where those cold relics lay,  
 With wild emotion, words cannot pourtray;  
 And tho' he knew remonstrance then were vain,  
 Yet could it be, that he must hear again,  
 Repeat those words, that outrage of the Duke,  
 Nor him upbraid in terms of stern rebuke?  
 Yes! thus defenceless, bound in hostile land,  
 This would release him from the Norman's hand.  
 Faltering first, and then to fate resigned,  
 The Saxon swore, but with averted mind.  
 With his right hand the holy sign he made,  
 While on the shrine the left he gently laid:  
 In tones distinct and with perfidious tongue,  
 Odo proclaims the oath from Harold wrung,  
 Who with stern look now fixed on William's brow,  
 That vow repeats in tones of secret woe:

" I swear, so soon as Edward is no more  
 I will receive you on the English shore ;  
 Assist your purpose to ascend the throne,  
 Oppose all others and their claims disown :  
 To wife I promise, Adelize to take,  
 And give my sister to the choice you make."

He added then,—so quick his thought re-acts,—  
 " If I have life and God approve my acts " :—  
 The vast assembly with one voice exclaimed,  
 " If God approve what you have now proclaimed."  
 As on his lips each word successive died,  
 Were woes to come, and treasons multiplied ;  
 And vows were made, fraught with a nation's fate,  
 With shame to Harold time may not abate.

And now Lanfranc the caskets both removed  
 From off the cloth, and thus, alas ! approved  
 The crime, the fraud about to be revealed,  
 And from that council carefully concealed.  
 Calm Harold stood, tho' anxious grew his eye,  
 As still he gazed upon that mystery.  
 A pause ensued, 'mid looks of doubt, surprise,  
 Till the great Duke enjoined them all to rise,  
 That the whole council with unerring view,  
 Might see, might judge, might testify how true,  
 How great, the oath which Harold thus had sworn,  
 What holy sanction that dread oath had borne.  
 By order, Odo raised the cloth of gold,  
 And bare to sight unveiled the relics cold.  
 Harold beheld them ; horror seized his heart,  
 His hands he clasped with a convulsive start ;

His eye flashed fire, his brow grew dark as night,  
As he receded from that ghastly sight ;  
Tho' his lip quivered and his cheek was pale,  
No words he spoke ; they could not now avail.  
Deceived, betrayed by an atrocious fraud,  
Too well he knew, how widely spread abroad,  
Thro' every land where Christian rights were known,  
That oath would be, and as a crime be shown.  
The tomb's cold relics in those distant times,  
In awe were held, despite transcendent crimes ;  
And when on these a solemn oath was made,  
Such vow to break, the boldest were afraid.  
He had so sworn, tho' treachery ere might be ;—  
He was so bound, could aught now set him free ?  
And Harold's doom, and England's mightier fate,  
From that sad hour their coming woe might date.  
The fiery wrath which fell on Harold's race,  
To that dark deed a distant age would trace.  
Thence flowed the tide of conquest o'er these isles,  
Long, well prepared by William's secret wiles ;  
And Harold's weakness in one fatal hour  
Gave strength and sanction to his conqu'ring power.  
As slow the Saxon from that shrine withdrew,  
Those high-born men, both saw and felt how true  
The inward anguish by that Prince controlled,  
And sorrow moved in hearts not wholly cold.  
Impassive, stern, Duke William still remains,  
While breathless silence thro' the council reigns,  
And warlike chieftains that great hall around,  
Await the mandate of that chief renown'd.

Lanfranc and Odo to their seats return,  
Approach the Norman and his orders learn :  
And then aloud, by proclamation made,  
The Senate's labours for that day were stayed :  
Debate, nor counsel, did they more pursue,  
And gladly thence those nobles all withdrew.  
Outside, abroad, the growing rumour flies,  
Excites the many and confounds the wise :  
Great Harold's oath on sacred relics sworn,  
Wide, far around on wings of fame is borne.

Within that castle, built by warlike men,  
Were regal halls, adorned with splendor then ;  
The stately home through many a vanished year,  
Of mighty chiefs, in long sojournings there.  
The Norman Prince with Harold, then repaired  
To state apartments for his guest prepared :  
Silent the Saxon went ; for sudden grief  
Within his breast, nor hopes, nor seeks relief.  
All now was known ; at length, too plain appeared,  
While from the Duke a darker fate he feared :  
Such foul betrayal showed that chief too well,  
And what might follow where his fury fell.  
Thus sworn on relics, known, alas ! too late,  
This dreadful oath might rule his future fate.  
No glorious deeds, renown which he might share,  
Could e'er for him so great a fault repair.  
That guilty vow would cloud the Patriot's fame,  
Shed with'ring blight upon his honored name ;—  
He had betrayed his race, a nation's cause,  
His noblest deeds could claim no more applause.



He England's pride, a people's latest hope,  
 Could hardly now with Dane or Norman cope.  
 Her old renown, her safety held so dear,  
 His father's glory, and his own career ;—  
 That shadowy hope, scarce formed within his breast,  
 Yet passing there like dream or vision blest ;—  
 A hope he rarely to himself must own,  
 That he one day would sit on England's throne ;—  
 All perilled thus, in one disastrous hour,  
 In such a cause, for so accursed a power !  
 Before his foe the path of conquest lay ;  
 The traitor he, to point the fatal way :  
 He who ere now, dread foes as widely known,  
 So oft had foiled,—in conflict overthrown ;  
 He who had vanquished with his valiant arm,  
 Shielding the throne from peril and alarm ;  
 Thus sell his country, his great trust betray,  
 To the fierce Norman and his ruthless sway !  
 These madd'ning thoughts o'er which no light may beam,  
 Weighed on his spirit like some ghastly dream.  
 This speechless woe, Duke William then could read,  
 For well he knew how heart like his must bleed,  
 In that dread hour of darkly-clouded fate,  
 And keen remorse which ever comes too late.  
 The Norman Prince no word of triumph spoke,  
 But mildly thus the painful silence broke :—  
 “ My kinsman Harold, well hast thou redeemed  
 Thy Princely word : though many may be deemed,  
 From all my favors more securely mine,  
 No faith I value as I value thine :

Near my great throne thy honored post shall be ;  
I place my trust, my surest hopes in thee."

After short pause, with cold, rebukeful eye,  
The Saxon Prince to William made reply :

"These courteous words my soul cannot relieve  
Of one great fault, my lot will be to grieve ;  
My error this, that I in evil hour,  
My freedom placed in your remorseless power.  
Of all the friendship you have feigned for me,  
Is this my oath, your crime, the proof to be ?  
My acts, forsooth, you loudly now applaud,  
And well you might, but for that odious fraud.  
Yet deeds so awful will ere long involve.  
Questions too vast for us alone to solve.  
But words are vain ; to-morrow I depart,  
With hopes betrayed, with self-upbraiding heart.  
Your former promise justly now I claim ;  
In this at least be free from further blame.  
Those kinsmen loved, my coming was to greet,  
Yield to my prayer ; their freedom I entreat.  
Their presence here cannot secure your throne ;  
And this last act may for one fault atone.  
Their cruel exile to these shores should cease,  
And my dread oath secure them their release.  
This I implore ; oh ! grant me but this prayer,  
That this one wrong, at least, you may repair.  
This end attained, I gladly take my leave  
Of shores so hostile, hoping to retrieve  
My honor perilled, mourn this weakness shown,  
Your acts forget, and expiate my own."

Surprise the Norman showed, but no regret ;  
 Stern his resolves, which ne'er had faltered yet :  
 His boundless pride, his bold aspiring mind,  
 Sought all to sway by hope and fear combined :  
 With spirit cast in rude but stately mould,  
 His iron will grew fierce and uncontrolled :  
 A soul so firm and seldom taught to yield,  
 O'er feebler minds did force resistless wield ;  
 But chiefly he upon his speech retained  
 Supreme control and cold reserve maintained.  
 His pregnant words, pronounced in tone sedate,  
 Bespoke a mind profound, but not elate :  
 His passions fierce he seemed to rule at will,  
 And others swayed with ease and matchless skill.  
 Yet when he sought by courteous arts to please,  
 He argued, praised, discoursed with fluent ease :  
 He hope encouraged, slumb'ring fears awoke,  
 Could cogent reasons for each act evoke.  
 Tho' now secure, time and events to wait,  
 For Harold struggled in the grasp of fate ;  
 And tho' full answer his great vow supplied,  
 Yet thus diffuse he artfully replied :  
 " This self-reproach, thy censure, is unjust :  
 Whence these regrets, this real or feigned distrust ?  
 Is this thy friendship ? is it a fault in me,  
 That trust unbounded I have placed in thee ?—  
 To have disclosed the secrets of my soul  
 To one so great, above all mean control ?  
 I from the first, a closer alliance claimed,  
 And when secured, must I, forsooth, be blamed ?

When thus allied, by friendship and by blood,  
 Will not my aim still be our common good ?  
 Are not my hopes, our empire to extend,—  
 Our names and glory closer yet to blend ?  
 On Mont St. Michel, 'mid that night's repose,  
 Didst thou not freely this great oath propose ?  
 If not in words, in meaning still the same,  
 And, so agreed, we both to Bayeux came.  
 Can sacred bones more surely, firmly bind  
 Thy future conduct, or thy princely mind,  
 Than word of promise, pledge to friendship given,  
 Which stands recorded in the books of heaven ?  
 Thy bitter words may wound, but not impair,  
 The holier sanction, sure and sacred there ;  
 Nor can reproach which thou mayst now repeat,  
 High heaven's will, or my designs defeat.

“ Thy lot was cast beneath propitious stars,  
 Nor yet been darkened by great public cares.  
 In childhood mine, and still in later life,  
 At first forlorn, and then thro' scenes of strife,  
 My dreams hath robbed of every fonder hope,  
 But left few foes who dare with me to cope :  
 For when my father to the Holy Land  
 Went forth the leader of a warlike band,  
 My life, this realm he left to chosen few,  
 Who soon conspired, and many others too.  
 Ere he had left, the nobles fealty swore,  
 And then betrayed the sacred trust they bore ;  
 Against me fiercely foreign rivals rose,  
 With whom I warred, my most relentless foes :

These one by one, my valor did subdue,  
 Their banded hosts, their projects overthrew.  
 My father died and left me to contend  
 With jealous kinsmen, seeking still to rend  
 This fair dominion from my sword, my sway,  
 And to my foes, my life and throne betray :  
 Strong in my right, confiding in my sword,  
 I swore to vanquish and I kept my word.  
 From fame, thou knowest the dangers I have shared ;  
 That wars, revolts have not my rule impaired :  
 Those fierce, rude conflicts of my early years  
 Attest my courage, but betray no fears.  
 Though many a field my skill, my arms have won,  
 And bright the course my fortune still hath run,  
 Yet on my heart the weight of many a care  
 Hath taught me well in friendship to beware ;  
 And past experience adds the mournful truth,  
 So hard to learn in manhood as in youth,  
 Few hearts are faithful, save among the free,  
 And hence I place unfailing trust in thee.  
 " Thro' all these perils which beset my crown,  
 'Midst all the triumphs which I since have known,  
 No angry word, no action canst thou trace,  
 Against thy country, or the Saxon race.  
 Our kinsman Edward well my friendship knows,  
 And still for him, my deep affection flows :  
 The love he bore me in my boyhood's years,  
 Was since repaid, as from the past appears :  
 Him I've protected, saved to fill a throne ;  
 Hence all his glory, hence, great Prince, thine own,

(Tho' thy renown, thy patriot, proud career,  
 Long I have known, and would not question here.)  
 His crown, his sceptre must descend to me,—  
 That glorious throne my heritage should be.  
 'Tis Edward's hope, his oft-expressed design,  
 That his dominion should one day be mine ;  
 To thee, no doubt, who hast his counsels shared,  
 This earnest wish was long ere this declared :  
 And if that kingdom ere descend by will  
 To him best fitted that great throne to fill,  
 My power alone your monarch can replace,  
 Resist invasion and secure you peace.  
 My former foes are baffled, or expelled,  
 And fierce revolt has everywhere been quelled :  
 Years of repose, of growing wealth and power  
 May intervene before that fatal hour :  
 Our vet'ran legions will renown achieve,  
 And on the march of future conquest leave,  
 In many a land, the memories of the brave,  
 The earth subdue, and triumph o'er the wave ;—  
 To shores remote will bear, with endless fame,  
 Our glorious flag, our proud and blended name ;—  
 The vast renown foretold to England's arms,  
 Will peace impose, and silence war's alarms ;—  
 And famous rulers thro' far-coming times  
 Will sway the sceptre of those boundless climes ;—  
 Maintain undimmed the glory of a race,  
 Whose sons to us their lofty line will trace,  
 And o'er the ocean, borne by every breeze,  
 The Northman still be sov'reign of the seas.

If Saxon England call me to the throne,  
 My arms and armies she will make her own :  
 Three kindred nations will as one remain ;—  
 Throughout the land long years of peace will reign,  
 And her own laws stern justice shall maintain.  
 This thy pledge, no more ; this thy sacred oath,—  
 Apart from relics which attest its truth.  
 Can soul like thine, can patriot hopes so true,  
 Refuse my hand, reproach on me bestow ;  
 Who'd wreath fresh laurels round thy dauntless brow ;  
 Who would thy name to highest glory raise,  
 And swell the chorus of a nation's praise ;  
 Who Dane and Norman, Saxon seek to blend,  
 In bonds of union, time can never rend ?  
 No, valiant Harold, thou art great and free  
 To bless thy race, to aid thyself and me.  
 To prove thy faith, thy brother leave behind,  
 And for his safety I mine honour bind :  
 Thy nephew Haco hither take with thee,  
 But, as a guest, leave noble Ulf with me.  
 This favor grant, that when our league is known :—  
 Thy trust in me may by this act be shown.  
 Our friendship and thy promise too proclaim,  
 And sanction acts which some might seek to blame."

Thus spoke the Norman, his far hopes expressed :  
 Him, in reply, the Saxon thus addressed :  
 " I know, great Princee, what your career hath been,  
 Your laurels won in many a glorious scene ;—  
 And all those perils, stated now with truth,  
 Which fiercely rose around your early youth ;—

And mighty foes taught, one and all, to yield  
 To skill, to valor on the tented field ;—  
 Your power I know, the vast renown you claim,  
 Your long success, the splendour of your fame.  
 But more I've learned, and learned, alas ! too well,  
 That your fair words your actions all excel ;  
 These glowing thoughts, this cloquence of speech,  
 To one betrayed, a deeper lesson teach :  
 Your loud applause, the promise thus express'd,  
 No hope can bring to my distracted breast.  
 My brother Ulf you oft declared was free  
 From all restraint, and should go hence with me :  
 The boon thus promised you do now withhold,  
 And this design your honeyed words unfold ;  
 Yet I was warned by those who knew the hand  
 That held him bound in this too hostile land.  
 Hear my last prayer ; since I with him must part,  
 Deal gently, Princee, with that young, saddened heart ;—  
 As hope for him must henceforth be in vain ;  
 Let him not feel the harsh oppressor's chain ;—  
 Let not your wrath, in some dark future time,  
 Fall on that head, that life without a crime ;—  
 That soul unstained, which ne'er by word or thought  
 Hath wrong to you, or to your country, brought.  
 As to my fate, may that ne'er claim your care ;  
 For Heaven's vengeance, I must now prepare ;  
 From you I ask, I seek for no relief ;  
 A soul like yours makes light of others' grief.



But let this pass ; with you all words are vain,—  
 They would increase, but not assuage my pain.  
 Yet ere I go I would not leave unsaid  
 One last remonstrance ('tis not to upbraid)  
 Against the schemes of conquest you proclaim,  
 And the amends you offer for my shame.

“ To Edward’s friendship, all your rights I know,  
 And great rewards on you he may bestow :  
 In such discussion I shall claim no share,  
 Nor is it mine, my wishes to declare :  
 But of the kingdom, he dare not dispose,  
 Nor it bequeath to one of England’s foes ;  
 And you should not, nor can you e’er, forget,  
 How much the Normans are distasteful yet  
 To that proud race, nor what the task would be,  
 Your rule to force upon a land so free.  
 Tho’ in your favor prove the monarch’s will,  
 The people love, revere their Princes still ;  
 They would refuse to recognize your claim,  
 Despite your strength, and all your martial fame.  
 Remember too, Prince Edgar’s England’s heir,  
 A truth of which the nation is aware :  
 Tho’ he be young, perchance of feeble mind,  
 Yet that great people, in their strength combined,  
 May promptly place him on the English throne,  
 And all the right of Cerdic’s lineage own.  
 Believe, great Prince, your projects would excite  
 Long, wasteful wars, the hopes of years would blight :  
 For should you e’er invade the Saxon soil,  
 And seek by arms the kingdom to despoil,

On hostile shores you would as surely meet  
 Their warlike hosts, perchance a dire defeat.  
 Met by the fury of a nation's wrath,  
 A thousand perils would beset your path ;  
 And should your arms triumphant o'er them prove,  
 You'd plant your standards on a nation's grave.  
 What then would follow ? years of hopeless strife,  
 Fierce wars of race, crimes, waste of human life.  
 These are the woes ambition would prepare,  
 And these the blessings, conquest would confer.  
 Conquest only can the throne ensure,  
 By conquest only can you be secure.  
 My oath may bind, each act of mine prove true,  
 But in this work all must depend on you :  
 Candor forbids your hopes I should deceive ;  
 Your arms alone can these designs achieve."

The Norman Prince, his eye now flashing fire,  
 With stern control repressed his kindling ire ;  
 Constrained he spoke, his anger ill concealed,  
 While looks of wrath his fiery thoughts revealed :

" Why all these perils studiously retrace,  
 To me, the ruler of the Norman race ?  
 Dost thou conceive such dangers would deter,  
 When my just rights and my best hopes concur ?  
 More than all men's, my spirit doth abhor  
 The crimes, the horrors of all-wasting war ;  
 And when by peace those rights I can obtain,  
 From arms, from blood I carefully abstain.  
 But when all other, better means have failed,  
 Before stern war my sword hath never quailed.

Bear this in mind, be thou exempt from blame,  
 Avoid God's wrath, and talk no more of shame.  
 Thy glory now, thy country's interest still,  
 Combine in this,—do thou thy part fulfil;  
 These aims pursue, redeem thy promise made,  
 And by thy words, by strenuous means persuade  
 Thy Saxon nobles of my high resolve,  
 And of those perils war must needs involve,  
 If their resistance I am doomed to meet,  
 Or should they seek my projects to defeat.  
 The feeble Edgar must his fate abide,  
 And all his claims be promptly cast aside:  
 With these great truths be thou and all impressed,  
 And count on me; my sword will do the rest.  
 From honor's path my steps will not depart,  
 For Heaven's will instructs and guides my heart.  
 But now no more; time and success will prove  
 That my best hopes are in the powers above."  
 Tho' calm the tone in which the Norman spoke,  
 From his dark eye awakening fury broke.  
 This Harold saw, and marked each word and look,  
 And this the warrior was compelled to brook.  
 Here prudence taught, in outward sign to yield,  
 And deeper thoughts, resentment keep concealed.  
 Thus briefly he the haughty Duke addressed,  
 In studied words which dubious sense expressed:  
 "An oath, great Prince, I've sworn; on that rely  
 If life I have and sanction from on high.  
 To be so ruled must be my duty still;  
 Each hope, each promise rightly to fulfil."

Duke William now unbent his laughty pride ;  
 And to Prince Harold eagerly replied :

“Thine oath I have ; and in return I swear,  
 First in my fortunes thou shalt ever share ;  
 In fields of fame, or seated near the throne,  
 To every nation our high friendship known :  
 Great Harold still shall Saxon rights uphold,  
 And highest honors to his race behold :  
 We'll blend the glory of heroic names,  
 And our renown transmit to future times.  
 Receive this pledge, as it is freely given ;  
 Besides my word, its record is in heaven.”

Thus in their thoughts, their tone and speech constrained,  
 Those chiefs renowned in converse brief remained.  
 Soon to a levee Normans, Saxons throng,  
 And in discourse their audience there prolong.  
 By courteous arts, he could at will exert,  
 Duke William sought attention to divert  
 From topics painful to Prin. Harold's mind,  
 While high-born men, with words and gesture kind,  
 And reverent looks, the Saxon chief surround,  
 And blame device which hero thus had bound.  
 But ranking still within the Saxon's breast,  
 Corroding deep, because now unexpressed,  
 Burned the dire thought of that detested fraud,  
 Too foul for even Normans to applaud.

In a vast hall a banquet stood prepared,  
 By all those princes, nobles to be shared.  
 With regal fare and richest viands laid,  
 Of guests that board a long array displayed ;

And costly wines, by many a trader sought,  
 And for the Duke from various regions brought.  
 With stately splendour shone that gorgeous scene,  
 Where ne'er before such royal feast had been.  
 The hour had come and lordly guests were there,  
 Warriors renowned and men of lineage rare ;  
 But honored most were those of Saxon blood,  
 And 'midst them all two warlike Princes stood.  
 Duke William first, with gracious words to all,  
 Looked still the chief, no dangers could appal ;—  
 Less tall than Harold and in aspect cold,  
 But cast in apler, more gigantic mould ;—  
 His joyless smile, serene and godlike brow,  
 The steadfast air which high resolves bestow ;—  
 The stern repose in his imperial eye,  
 And shades of thought which man's research defy,  
 All gave imposing grandeur to his look,  
 Which neither freedom nor approach could brook ;—  
 Something repressive, ruthless to his mien,  
 Which none forgot who once that man had seen.  
     Came Harold next, that chief of peerless name,  
 The loftiest head, the knight of purest fame.  
 The same in age, by better hopes impelled,  
 In strength and grace the Norman he excelled :  
 His acts as courteous as his spirit bold,  
 Nor could the eye more splendid form behold.  
 Men's hearts he gained, they deep devotion gave  
 To one so gentle, chivalrous and brave :  
 There was a mildness in his fearless eye  
 That won, unasked, men's love and sympathy :

Yet ever on his pale and princely brow,  
 There dwelt a sadness grief does not bestow ;  
 The fatal shadow of a doom too near,  
 Which struck him down in height of life's career.  
 Within his bosom glowed one steady flame,—  
 A love of glory, hope of deathless fame :  
 Alas ! those perils which await on power,  
 Betrayed, destroyed, in one ill-fated hour !

Soon to that feast the princes led the way,  
 And following there those guests in long array.  
 Harold's high place was now on William's right,  
 While on his left, conspicuous to the sight,  
 With courtly ease and graceful pride combined,  
 His brother Odo had his seat assigned.  
 Lanfranc the Priest, by Odo had his seat,  
 And with kind words each other there they greet.  
 On Harold's right was Geoffrey of Coutances,  
 And much his presence did men's joy enhance.  
 A prelate he of learning and repute,  
 Of joyous manners, and a mind acute :—  
 And next to him Count Robert of Mortmain,  
 The Duke's half-brother, did a place retain ;  
 And many others, some of equal name,  
 All mighty men and later known to fame.  
 Around that board proud nobles took their place,  
 With friendly speech, without regard to race.  
 And Ulf was there, his nephew Haco too,  
 And noble Saxons to their country true,  
 Who each that oath and this great feast deplored,  
 And to depart had Harold oft implored.

William was grave, but courteous to his guest,  
 And the great Prince in cheerful tones addressed.  
 Tho' Harold smiled, a cloud was on his brow,  
 And in his heart, a deep consuming woe.  
 Swift fled the hours, fast flowed the purple wine,  
 And hearts and hands in friendship would combine.  
 Proud, thoughtful minds in part forgot their care,  
 Stern men waxed gay, and joyous hearts were there.  
 But of that feast the Saxon scarce partook,  
 Nor for a moment his reserve forsook.  
 The hours passed on, the time of parting came;  
 First Harold went, his followers did the same;  
 Then followed William and his nobles too:  
 And to repose those Princes all withdrew.  
 With glowing dawn the morn arose next day,  
 To cheer the Saxon on his homeward way;  
 And ere the sun had yet ascended high,  
 Amid the glories of the eastern sky,  
 Harold departed. With him Haco went,  
 But Ulf remained, a fatal grief to vent,  
 Thro' hopeless years of exile and despair,  
 And woes too great for youthful hearts to bear.  
 The Saxon chiefs went gladly onward now,  
 And with them William with unruffled brow:  
 While Norman nobles followed in their train,  
 These guests to honor with display now vain.  
 The sea they reach long ere the star of day,  
 O'er earth had shed his latest evening ray.  
 That glorious sea! resplendent 'neath the beam  
 Of setting suns which o'er its waters gleam;

Harold with joy beheld that sea once more,  
 While with glad ear he listened to its roar.  
 Once on its waves and borne before the gale,  
 He'd 'scape regrets which could not now avail :—  
 That with'ring chill which paralyzed the soul,  
 Would vanish soon, nor long his thoughts control ;  
 The ocean chief exulting o'er the wave,  
 Would darkest hour of midnight peril brave,  
 And should the winds their nightly revels keep,  
 The tempest's roar would lull his woes to sleep.  
 Yet how return, how that foul deed proclaim ?  
 How greet companions of his former fame ?  
 Altho' now free and eager to depart,  
 This grief profound still lingered round his heart.

Two ships at anchor did the Prince await,  
 For him prepared with pomp and royal state.  
 Ere he embarked, upon that shore they stood,  
 All grave and calm, in solemn, thoughtful mood,  
 While William there, fit tributes to the brave ;  
 Rare, costly gifts to the great Saxon gave ;  
 Such gifts as well became a mighty Prince,  
 A monarch's tokens, friendship to evince.  
 Now length'ning shadows of departing day  
 Fall from the hills and deepen o'er the bay,  
 Where Harold's bark rides to the rising gale,  
 With ready helm and white expanding sail :  
 The setting sun sinks slowly in the west,  
 O'er distant oceans, regions of the blest :



On the horizon, ling'ring to the sight,  
 And passing thence to other realms of light,  
 'Mid golden clouds, bright isles of many a hue,  
 Like holier worlds to man's despairing view,—  
 Serene abodes, so far removed from strife,  
 They seem the sojourns of immortal life,—  
 Celestial homes where angel spirits dwell,  
 Or that fair scene where our first parents fell ;—  
 While deep beyond, all splendour to the eye,  
 Recede the glories of the evening sky ;—  
 A far, effulgent canopy of light,  
 Fading from day to azure of the night,  
 Till light and darkness, with all blending power,  
 Meet in the mys'tries of the twilight hour.  
 The night descends ; low winds the ocean sweep,  
 And Harold now looks wistful o'er the deep.  
 Then said those chiefs a long, a last adieu :—  
 Farewell to friendship they shall ne'er renew :—  
 They met again, but on another shore,  
 In fatal strife, 'mid battle's deaf'ning roar.

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## BOOK FOURTH.

### ARGUMENT.

Historical retrospect.—Review of the early invasions of England, and of the settlement in succession of the different invaders.—Julius Cæsar and the Romans.—Their wars with the native Britons, and the progress of the imperial arms.—Roman policy, government and civilization in Britain.—Supremacy of Rome, and the decline of her power.—Irruptions and devastations of the barbarians.—Alaric and the Goths.—Their invasion of Greece.—Stilicho the Vandal.—His march into Greece, and the retreat of the Goths.—Alaric invades Italy.—Battles of Pollentia and Verona.—Stilicho defeats the Goths, and drives them beyond the Alps.—Rhadagaisus and the hordes from the shores of the Baltic.—Defeat and death of Rhadagaisus, and the overthrow of the Confederate Barbarians by Stilicho, in a great battle near Florence.—Desolation of Gaul.—Second invasion of Italy by Alaric.—Death of the Vandal.—Siege and sack of Rome by the Goths.—Plunder and subjugation of the South.—Collapse of the Empire of the West.—The separation and independence of Britain.—The Saxons, Danes and other invaders.—Long periods of darkness, desolation and anarchy in Britain.—Dawn of better times.—Consolidation of the English monarchy.—Succession of Dynasties to the time of Edward the Confessor.

IN long review here let our thoughts survey  
Far other scenes of England's earlier day,  
And o'er the retrospect of ages gone,  
Behold how nations were by war undone :—  
How on the waves of fiery deluge borne,  
Barbarian conquest, in those days forlorn,  
O'erspread the earth with havoc and despair,  
And built its thrones beneath the lurid glare  
Of desolation, 'mid the wrecks of time ;  
And stained with blood of unrepented crime,  
The iron sceptres which the conquerors bore  
O'er vanquished races which rose up no more.  
See ruthless Northmen, as invaders sweep  
Thro' midnight perils the tempestuous deep,

Till in their course, with stern and high command,  
 Rude sway they hold o'er this immortal land.  
 Fierce Roman legions, then wild northern hordes,  
 Of fair Britannia the triumphant lords,  
 Subdue the natives, the fair isle despoil,  
 Then plant their standards on the blood-stained soil.  
 Amidst what storms did Albion's sun arise,  
 To blaze in glory from her noon-day skies !  
 What mighty conflicts in a distant age  
 Did savage tribes in wrath against her wage !  
 What toil and blood, what vast invasions came, }  
 Ere England raised the temple of her fame, }  
 And filled the earth with echoes of her name ! }  
 Around her shores man's blood hath dyed the deep ;  
 Low in her vales lost generations sleep ;  
 And from dim realms of legend and the dead,  
 O'er which the past hath dull oblivion spread,  
 Loom forth grim memories of rulers gone,  
 Of crimes too great for glory to atone.  
 Upon my course, O Muse, shed clearer light ;  
 Guide me secure far thro' the solemn night,  
 And shadows deep, low brooding o'er the waste  
 Of woeful times and desert centuries past :  
 O'er fallen thrones and temples lead my way,  
 With aid divine, to dawn of brighter day :—  
 Let me behold, of nations now no more,  
 The awful tombs upon the silent shore  
 Of Time's dark ocean ; and from old renown,  
 The desolation of those days make known.  
 Ages had gone, and ere Prince Harold's day,  
 Eleven hundred years had passed away,  
 Since, fired with glory, Rome's imperial power  
 Sought fields of conquest on Britannia's shore.  
 The great first Cæsar, in his warlike pride,  
 A race assailed which well his arms defied :

Tho' long victorious in the wilds of Gaul,  
 Great Albion's chiefs his arms could not appal :—  
 He came and saw, but sought not to explore,  
 And, making peace, regained the Gallic shore.  
 There fleets were built, arm'd preparations made,  
 And fierce ambition each resource displayed.  
 Then all equipp'd, beneath that dread command  
 Again his legions sought this distant land ;  
 A war ensued, and then resistance spread  
 From tribe to tribe, by patriot chieftains led :  
 And the rude Britons, warring but o'erthrown,  
 Yield to a foe supreme in earth's renown.  
 Soon their great king, last hope 'mid war's alarms,  
 Cassivelaunus sunk beneath their arms.  
 At Verulam this warlike Prince subdued,  
 Submission made, and then a peace ensued.  
 To Rome in triumph Cæsar straight repaired,  
 Boasting aloud of all his arms had dared ;  
 Of conquests made in far and wondrous isle,  
 And fertile regions others might despoil.  
 But vain the laurels which the hero gained,  
 Where soon no vestige of his power remained.  
 A respite came,—long years then passed away,  
 Ere proud Britannia bowed to Roman sway.  
 Meantime Caligula with empty boast,  
 And menace stern, collects a mighty host :  
 But the fierce tyrant dreads this hostile shore,  
 And fleets and armies which ne'er paused before,  
 Parade their pomp, their warlike strength in vain,  
 That one crowned fool a triumph might obtain.  
 Yet veteran armies on a later day,  
 Did Rome's ambition and her power display :  
 Imperial legions in their might arrayed,  
 And chosen generals, steady progress made :

The native tribes, by mutual hatred torn,  
 Recoil, retreat, by conquering arms o'erborne.  
 The proud Caractacus was forced to yield  
 To Roman valor on immortal field :—  
 From Caer Caradoc's ensanguined hight  
 He fled pursued in long and rapid flight,  
 To Cartismanda, and by her betrayed,  
 The mighty captive was to Rome conveyed.  
 With eye serene, in aspect like a god,  
 The streets of Rome the British monarch trod ;  
 And as he moved, in Roman fetters bound,  
 His gaze he fixed upon the scene around ;—  
 Beheld Rome's trophies, stained with many a crime,  
 The spoils of conquest, brought from every clime.  
 Then to his view, amid admiring foes,  
 The stately homes of Roman wealth arose ;—  
 Statues of gold, designed by pagan thought,  
 Temples of fame, in matchless beauty wrought ;  
 Monuments of power, and shrines of man's renown,  
 And tributes rare of many a vanquished crown.  
 Viewing these splendours of victorious Rome,  
 He wonders why they sought his humble home.  
 Imperial Claudius, on his throne of power,  
 'Mid glory sat, in that triumphant hour ;  
 And near the standard to the breeze unfurled,  
 Reclined the Empress of the Roman world :  
 High o'er the millions who beheld that scene,  
 They greet the captive with benignant mien :  
 By Roman pride, the hero led in chains,  
 A patriot's heart, a dauntless soul maintains.  
 Then followed wars ; the Britons driven back,  
 Left desolation, slaughter in their track :  
 Tho' on the field their valor was displayed,  
 In many a scene they failing strength betrayed :

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Stern Roman chieftains followed them afar  
Filling the isle with havoc and despair.  
Till Suetonius took supreme command  
Of the invaders in this distant land ;  
A man of war and fired by love of fame,  
To rule, to conquer he to Britain came.  
The Druid's creed had long resistance shown,  
And by dark deeds too well its power was known :  
Unfailing foresight of these priestly men,  
Destruction saw impending o'er them then ;  
The storm beheld—employed each precious hour,  
To spread revolt against the Roman power.  
But now went forth precise and stern decree,  
That of this creed, Rome's empire should be free ;  
And Suetonius, eager to obey,  
Resolved to smite, destroy without delay.  
In Mona's isle, 'mid many a forest scene,  
From times remote that worship long had been :  
There priests and priestesses had refuge sought,  
And holiest emblems of their faith had brought.  
To leave no vestige, save of sword and flame,  
Here the great Roman with his legions came.  
By Druid priests, in long white robes arrayed,  
The Roman vanguard's dread assault was stayed.  
Appalled, they halt before the sacred band,  
Till loud is heard their general's stern command :  
Quick they advance, in close and fierce array,  
And sweep the victims of their wrath away.  
Females and Pontiffs, votaries of that faith,  
Lay weltering there in cold and cruel death.  
Their temples, groves were wrapt in instant flame,  
By rage and fury, pity could not tame.  
Suppliant vows arose to Heaven in vain,  
Nor 'mid the carnage could the sword restrain.

This immolation spread a hideous gloom,  
 And smote with horror of predestined doom.  
 Stern Suetonius still destroying there,  
 Soon all reduced to ruin and despair ;—  
 And on that day, the Druid and his creed,  
 In Britain perished by remorseless deed.

A contest fierce and fatal now ensued,  
 By which Britannia was in blood imbrued :  
 Roused by revenge in Boadicea's soul,  
 Whose fiery passions raged without control.  
 Throughout the realm a vast revolt arose,  
 Breathing destruction to her Roman foes.  
 She sought the woes of many a bitter day,  
 With fire and sword and havoc to repay.  
 Queen of the isles, she sways a warlike force,  
 Which checks the legions in their onward course,  
 While insurrection, 'neath her great command,  
 In fury swept thro' the insurgent land :  
 Each, all remembered what her wrongs had been,  
 And princes, warriors rallied round their Queen :  
 Barbarian levies, come from far and near,  
 Around her standard thronging now appear ;  
 And, fired with hate of Rome's imperial power,  
 In fierce impatience wait th' avenging hour.  
 London and Malden wrapt in sudden flame,  
 The Queen's resolve too loudly did proclaim.  
 The Roman general, with experienced eye,  
 Did all the dangers to his arms descry.  
 Retreating first, he marched from post to post,  
 Before the barbarous and infuriate host :  
 From distant stations promptly he withdrew  
 His veteran troops, and bravest chieftains too.  
 Thus reinforced, with peril all around,  
 For the great conflict fitting scene was found :

And there he halts, confronts their proud array,  
Resolved to die or conquer on that day.  
Long raged the contest on that field of blood,  
And well those foes each dread assault withstood.  
Along the ranks Queen Boadicea flew,  
With brow of wrath the carnage to renew.  
O'er all the plain, upon her chariot borne,  
She calls for vengeance on that day forlorn.  
With auburn hair, far streaming in the breeze,  
And warlike dress extending to the knees,  
Her voice, her gestures, maniac fury wore,  
And awed the legions 'mid the battle's roar.  
The martial Roman sternly kept his ground,  
And hurled destruction on his foes around.  
When their great chiefs lay low among the dead,  
The Britons faltered—in disorder fled.  
Vast, wild and bloody, final the retreat,  
Which followed there that victory and defeat ;  
And Boadicea left that fatal field,  
But to the Roman ne'er would deign to yield.  
His tyrant sway she boldly had defied,  
And as she lived, so unsubdued she died :  
By her own hand that famous Princess fell,  
Proving the fierceness of her soul too well.

After those days of slaughter and dismay,  
The power of Rome held less destructive sway ;  
Until once more the wild Silures arose,  
And with Brigantes did her rule oppose.  
But soon her arms o'erwhelming vengeance bore,  
And from those tribes resistance came no more.  
In later years, with almost sceptered hand,  
Agricola ruled all the subject land :  
Where'er great tribes rebellious hopes retain,  
His veteran legions did revolt restrain ;



And tho' those days were days of Rome's decline,  
 Still wealth, repose and policy combine  
 To spread a halo o'er disastrous times,  
 And bear her laws o'er Britain's conquered climes.  
 Scotia was free—was wild and unsubdued ;—  
 Her valiant sons, invasion had withstood.  
 With Picts and Scots they oft and long allied,  
 The power of Rome triumphantly defied :—  
 To many a field, her patriot chiefs were called ;  
 They fled, returned, and still their arms appalled :  
 Till Galgacus, a prince of martial fame,  
 To meet invasion with his levies came.  
 The vast array of the barbarian foe,  
 From sterile hills swept to the vales below,  
 Where veteran valor, stern and undismayed,  
 In dreadful ranks stood silently arrayed.  
 Embattled legions firmly kept their posts,  
 Till came the shock of the contending hosts ;—  
 Then all was carnage, horror and despair,—  
 They smote, destroyed and thousands perished there ;  
 The Roman triumphed, but 'mid countless slain,  
 And Scotia's heroes strewed the hostile plain.  
 On Ardoch's moor deep o'er that fatal flight,  
 Slowly descended the cold shades of night.  
 The power of Rome—her wise decrees at length,  
 O'er all the realm went forth in warlike strength :—  
 From Cornwall's shores unto the Grampian hills,  
 That mighty name with awe the island fills.  
 Great walls and ramparts, military posts,  
 With strong defences on far sea-girt coasts,  
 Her rule maintained against the restless foes,  
 Whose hardy valor did her march oppose.  
 Proud her dominion on each frontier stood,  
 And peace maintained on land and by the flood ;

Great roads extended, toil its premium bore,  
 And Romans, natives, lived as foes no more :  
 Imperial power, the wealth and arts of Rome,  
 Of Roman life made here resplendent home.  
 Four hundred years the conquest now had swayed,  
 And vast and stately policy displayed ;—  
 Of Jove and Druid the dark rites were gone,  
 And God's true creed had sacred works begun ;  
 Beneath a sovereign and protecting hand,  
 Soon Christian light dawned o'er the subject land.  
 This change the heathen from his idols drew,  
 And thro' all ranks a pure religion grew ;  
 Peace, law and order followed in its train,  
 And Albion saw calm, hopeful times again.  
 Carleon sur Usk, a strong and frontier town,  
 Had grown to wealth, to splendor and renown ;  
 London and York and others widely known,  
 To noble cities in those times had grown.  
 Between these towns were posts and strongholds found,  
 And camps and legions stationed were around ;  
 Theatres and baths on famous sites arose,  
 And pompous tombs where glory might repose ;  
 Towers of defence, great temples, false and true,  
 Loomed far and near, and claimed the passer's view ;  
 Fair Roman homes, academies of thought,  
 And trade's great marts by commerce freely sought :—  
 All these were there, adorned this distant land,  
 And grew beneath the conqueror's ruling hand.

Thus from the coasts where the Atlantic roars,  
 To the soft dales by the Euphrates' shores ;—  
 From the great wall by Caledonia's streams,  
 To where the sun of Central Afric beams ;—  
 Thro' all the bounds of eastern, western day.  
 The Roman sceptre held its sovereign sway :

Spain, Britain, Gaul and Africa were bound,—  
 Ausonia, Greece, and many an isle around ;—  
 And Orient realms along the Tigris' shore,  
 Old Asia's climes, her stern dominion bore ;—  
 The far Euphrates, and the fertile Nile,  
 Along whose banks so many regions smile,  
 The Thames, the Severn, her proud empire own,  
 The Rhine, the Tiber and the rapid Rhone.  
 The Danube too, and many a mountain land,  
 And fertile vales beneath her rule expand ;  
 That mighty empire teemed with human life,  
 Vast scene of toil, of turbulence and strife ;  
 Of virtue, vice, convulsion and repose,  
 Of eager hopes, ambition and deep woes,  
 Of fleeting joys and intellectual pride,  
 And all that wealth and luxury supplied.  
 Rome awed the earth, footstool of her renown,  
 And wore the patriot's and the despot's crown,  
 Her early freedom, then her tyrant sway,  
 Had marked her course through many a vanished day ;  
 Her time was full, her great career was run,  
 And lowering storms hung round her setting sun.  
 Great Theodosius slept ;—his country's foes  
 Will ne'er disturb his long and last repose ;—  
 The mighty *genius* which so proudly bore  
 The Roman crown, commands her hosts no more ;—  
 The star of conquest, which had lured so long,  
 To deeds of glory, rapine and of wrong,  
 Had sunk to rise no more upon the earth,  
 Leaving the world to darkness and to wrath.  
 Degenerate sons succeeded to his *sway*  
 O'er subject thrones in Rome's declining day.  
 The weak Arcadius ruled the fertile East,  
 While young Honorius reigned o'er all the West.

Her great dominion thus divided stood,  
 In mournful pride, against the savage brood  
 Of Northern hordes, about to rush to arms,  
 To fill the world with woe and war's alarms.  
 Tho' vengeful tribes the frontiers had assailed,  
 O'er skill and valor they had not prevailed :—  
 And still they wait the dire, avenging hour,  
 Of final conflict with the Roman power.

O'erwhelming now, the dread tornado came,  
 And wrapp'd the world in storm, and death, and flame :—  
 The tempest's wrath broke o'er imperial Rome,  
 With signs prophetic of relentless doom :—  
 Fierce heathen hordes, wild tribes of many a race,  
 Swept o'er her frontiers, passed each guarded place.  
 The Rhine, the Danube, quick were traversed o'er,  
 And fierce barbarians woe and terror bore  
 To smiling lands, thro' fair and golden climes,  
 Laid waste and plundered in those woeful times :—  
 The towering Alps, with their eternal snows,  
 Are climbed, are scaled, by the advancing foes ;  
 And proud Italia, 'neath her azure skies,  
 The victim soon of the avenger lies ;—  
 The Goth and Roman, fired by deathless hate  
 Array their legions for the work of fate.

But turn we first to that resplendent land,  
 So oft despoiled by the invader's hand ;  
 Pale, thoughtful Greece with sorrow on thy brow,  
 And traces of hot tears, long dried up now ;  
 On thy young dreams what mystic light was shed,  
 What halos linger o'er thy peerless dead !  
 Clime where genius glowed with heavenly flame,  
 And patriot heroes won immortal fame ;—  
 Where Plato's wisdom, where the mightiest taught,  
 Of godlike beauty and far-soaring thought ;—

Where Homer, Sappho, breathed their lays divine,  
 Earth boasts no memories, no renown like thine.  
 From that dark day on Adrianople's plain,  
 Where Valens fought and Romans died in vain,  
 Barbarian tribes, migrating from the East,  
 Had distant frontiers pillaged and laid waste.  
 There prowled the Goth by the swift Danube's shore,  
 And oft his arms against the Empire bore :  
 At length these hordes, Alarie at their head,  
 Were by that chief thro' routes of conquest led ;  
 In hosts they marched by mountain and o'er plain,  
 And sought the soil of Attica to gain.  
 Thermopylæ they passed without a blow,  
 And poured like deluge on the realms below ;  
 Till where the city of Minerva stood,  
 They halted sternly in their march of blood.  
 Then yielded Athens to barbarian power,  
 Veiling her anguish in that fatal hour.  
 Feeble, defenceless, vanquished on that day,  
 Her head was bowed to the dread conqueror's sway.  
 The virgin goddess will defend no more,  
 The sacred shrine which once her worship bore.  
 Ill-fated Greece ! thy patriot hearts were cold  
 Beneath the soil their blood had dyed of old.  
 Nor Sparta, Argos, Corinth, struck a blow,  
 In thy defence against the ruthless foe,  
 Who marked with ruin thy all-glorious land,  
 And slaughtered, pillaged with unpitying hand.  
 The temples, treasures, relics of the past,  
 And all that should the wrath of man outlast,  
 With blood and tears were soiled upon that night,  
 On which the Goth, far marching in his might,  
 O'erran fair Greece, abodes of many a god,  
 And scenes defiled her heroes once had trod.

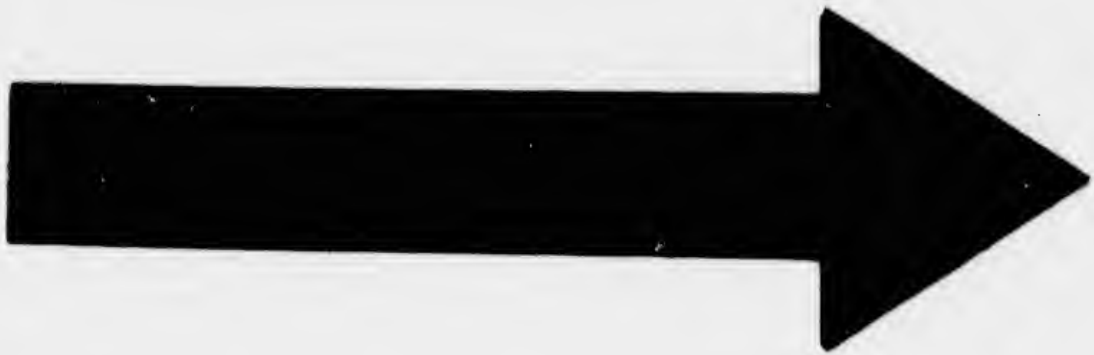
The wealth of ages, beauty, in despair,  
 The spoils, the victims, seized by rapine there :  
 And many a fane and hallowed haunt and vale,  
 Where'er their fury and their arms prevail,  
 Were trodden o'er, thro' that illustrious scene  
 Of man's resort, as they had never been.  
 Abodes of thought, of genius and renown,  
 Where godlike men had worn the victor's crown,  
 Whose mighty tombs are unforgotten yet,  
 And so will be, while Grecian suns shall set,  
 Bathing in splendor that unrivalled land,  
 So blest, adorned by nature's bounteous hand.  
 Thus all destroying, plundering on his course,  
 He saw approach with an avenging force,  
 The great Stilicho, general of the West,  
 Who on the Goth with veteran legions press'd.  
 By him assailed, and warned by a defeat,  
 The cruel foe sought safety in retreat.  
 Upon the Elean Mount, with cliffs around,  
 The Gothic Monarch passing refuge found.  
 Escaping thence, he fled with all his host  
 And in his flight sought the Egean coast.  
 The weak Arcadius, sovereign of the East,  
 Of these invaders sought to be released :—  
 For peace he sued and let the Goth depart,  
 While Roman virtue fired a Vandal's heart.  
 And there Stilicho whose unconquered sword  
 Had long been drawn two tottering thrones to guard,  
 Arrested, foiled in glory's bright career,  
 'Midst ruin halted on the Gothic rear :  
 And saw the foe, by an inglorious peace,  
 Retreat in triumph with the spoils of Greece.  
 Collecting hordes to war and rapine trained,  
 In brief repose, Alaric then remained,

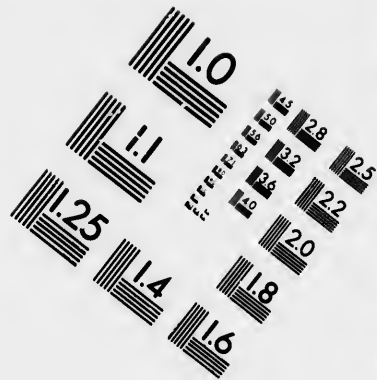
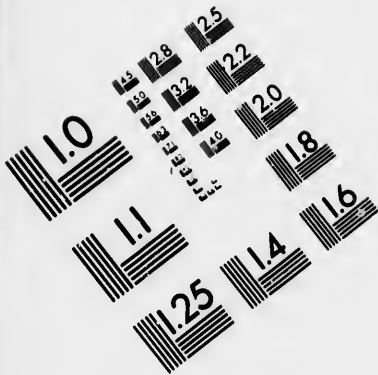
Till on Italia, with increasing wrath,  
 He marched 'mid havoc strewed upon his path.  
 The masters of the world were forced again,  
 To meet that chief upon more glorious plain.  
 From Britain then Honorius did recall,  
 A veteran army stationed near the wall,  
 On which the Romans did their skill bestow,  
 To guard the north against a restless foe.  
 And other legions, from strongholds afar,  
 Were now withdrawn, the fatal hour to share.  
 Of warlike force successively bereft,  
 Outlying realms defenceless soon were left,  
 The Gothic king and Stilicho once more,  
 Met in fierce conflict near Tanarus' shore ;  
 There on Pollentia's blood-stained field of death,  
 The Vandal hero won the laurel wreath ;—  
 Unlike the glory which to conquest leads,  
 But crowned with halo of immortal deeds ;—  
 The patriot's triumph and the warrior's crown,  
 Thro' time's long ages hallowed by renown.  
 The stern Alaric routed and pursued,  
 Was by Stilicho on that day subdued.  
 O'erwhelmed he fled in fury from that scene,  
 Where Rome victorious long before had been :—  
 For to the mind, thro' many centuries gone,  
 Come back the deeds which Marins there had done.  
 O'er the fierce Cimbri in their direst mood,  
 His arms had triumphed on that field of blood.  
 The bones of Goths and Cimbri mingle there,  
 Memorials still of slaughter and despair.  
 The wild invader, when that day was lost,  
 Retreated sternly with his vanquished host.  
 And near Verona on a later day,  
 The Gothic hordes encamped upon their way :—

Three Roman armies fiercely there enclose,  
 With hopes of vengeance, these relentless foes.  
 Alaric then, his savage arms at bay,  
 Did matchless valor in the field display.  
 Th' intrepid Vandal, Rome's last hope in war,  
 Smote the Barbarian till the evening star  
 Shone o'er that scene of carnage and defeat,  
 Illuming the horrors of that vast retreat.  
 The Roman chief, to strike the fatal blow,  
 Pursued the march of the retreating foe,  
 Whose martial mind no stratagems surprise,  
 Whose dauntless soul the victor still defies.  
 The mighty force which the barbarian still  
 Directs, commands by his unconquered will, }  
 Resists and foils the wary Vandal's skill ; }  
 Till mountain defiles warn him to beware,  
 To shun the fury of the Goth's despair ;  
 Who tho' escaping from a sinking state,  
 Saw death, despair and famine sent by fate,  
 Hang on his rear, far thro' that day of doom,  
 By many a land unto his frozen home.

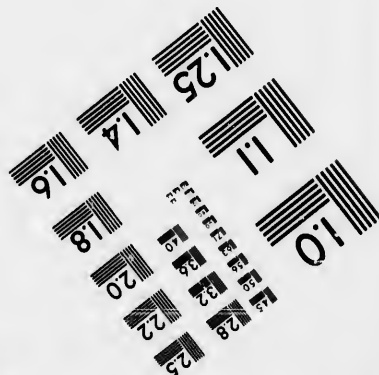
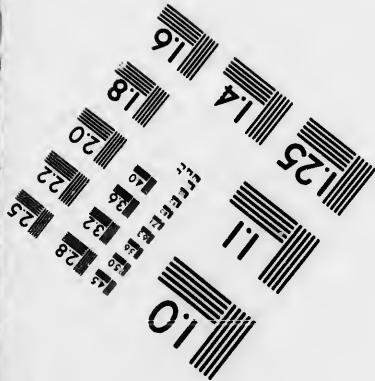
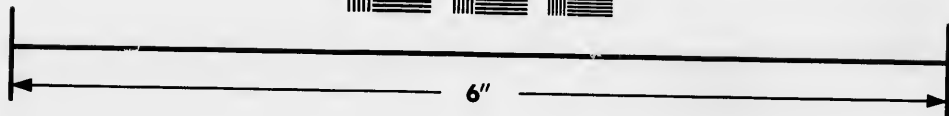
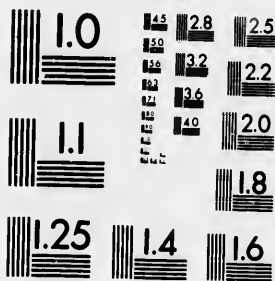
Now from the East the Scythian hordes came forth,  
 With savage nations, moving thro' the North,  
 In sudden wrath along the Baltic shore,  
 Whence came the Cimbri many an age before,  
 All rushed from regions of eternal snow,  
 With headlong fury on the realms below.  
 Thus fierce barbarians from the North and East,  
 On conquest bent toward the frontier press'd.  
 From wintry climes they sped o'er boundless plains,  
 And turned to deserts Europe's wide domains.  
 Burgundians, Suevi, Vandals, and the Goth,  
 With others leagued, poured fiercely on the South :—  
 Confederate nations formed that heathen host,  
 Altho' of many, name and trace be lost.







**IMAGE EVALUATION  
TEST TARGET (MT-3)**



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Two hundred thousand men, in dark array,  
 Moved like the tempest on its midnight way ;  
 Towards the Rhine and Danube was their course,  
 Which soon were pass'd by this invading force.  
 Round distant frontiers and strongholds afar,  
 Were heard the sounds and ravages of war.  
 Stern Rhadaginsus these wild nations led,  
 And death and ruin on his march were spread.  
 Of these apart, did southern climes invade,  
 And straight to Florence rapid marches made.  
 But slight resistance on their course they found,  
 And soon their hosts the city did surround.  
 There Rome's last guardian, victor on each field,  
 Did from destruction the fair Florence shield :  
 The savage hordes, enveloped and o'ercome,  
 Were routed, slaughtered by the arms of Rome :—  
 Upon the heights of Fiesulæ they died,  
 And far around upon the mountain side.  
 Their haughty chief, as captive there detained,  
 A cruel death, avenging doom sustained :—  
 For life he sued, with promise to depart,  
 But found no pity in the Vandal's heart.  
 None would that chieftain in his justice spare,—  
 Goths, Burgundians, Suevi, perished there ;—  
 And other tribes of dire barbarians too,  
 Were smitten down where'er his eagles flew.  
 Of this great host, now shattered by defeat,  
 Beyond the Alps a remnant sought retreat.  
 Then o'er the Rhine these banded nations rushed,  
 And in their fury all resistance crushed :—  
 Each strong defence which centuries before,  
 Proud Rome had built, and oft-times did restore, }  
 Was broken down, to be rebuilt no more ;  
 Chieftains of fame these hordes of conquest led,  
 Who throughout Gaul vast desolation spread.

Fire and carnage, fierce rapine and dismay,  
 O'erwhelmed those realms in Rome's declining day :  
 Soft scenes of peace, of splendor and renown,  
 Where Roman art and Roman wealth had grown,  
 By devastation in his cruel wrath,  
 Were all defaced in the destroyer's path.  
 Thro' every region of that famous land,  
 Nor Gaul, nor Roman could his fate withstand :  
 Temples and towers, bright homes of youth and years,  
 In ruin lay, were soiled with blood and tears.  
 Whole generations, on that dreadful day,  
 Were by the sword, by bondage swept away :—  
 Nor age, nor sex, the fierce barbarian spared,  
 But each in turn his ruthless fury shared.  
 Thro' Rome's vast empire, in that evil hour,  
 Tottered the thrones and fabric of her power ;—  
 And the proud tyrants of the ancient world  
 Kept watch by night, with ensigns all unfurled  
 To midnight winds, while lurid and afar,  
 Of her decline shone Rome's prophetic star.  
 Meantime Alaric swayed in wilder scene,  
 By frontier lands, where long his rule had been, }  
 The River Rhine and Euxine shores between.  
 There he assembled fierce, barbarian hosts,  
 With which he hovered near the Roman posts ;—  
 Hard on the limits of the East and West,  
 And each in turn his cruel arms oppress'd.  
 Till then Stilicho had his course restrained,  
 And sternly neutral he of late remained :  
 When Rhadagaisus felt the conqueror's blow,  
 He stood spectator of his overthrow.  
 But the dread Vandal, high in name and worth,  
 The foremost man in the renown of earth,  
 Crowned thro' all time with fame's unfading wreath,  
 Had met perfidious and inglorious death.

'Twas Rome's device, her crime that one so great,  
 Should fall o'erpowered by a rival's hate ;—  
 That he the last defender of the land,  
 Should foully perish by assassin's hand.  
 Yet thus he died, abandoned by that power,  
 His arm had saved in fate's all evil hour.  
 Olympius still in infamy should live,  
 And execrated on men's lips survive ;—  
 Remembered only by the mighty name,  
 Beneath whose shadow rots his blighted fame.  
 The watchful guardian of the Romans fell,  
 By those his sword had shielded but too well.  
 Bewildered, hopeless in his hour of need,  
 Soon weak Honorius mourned the cruel deed :  
 For the great Goth with armed myriads came,  
 And Rome, his victim, wept that day of shame.

Alaric's words forbearing tone retained,  
 Tho' of deep wrongs that chieftain still complained :—  
 He reached Ravenna, where Honorius now  
 In sloth refused to strike a patriot's blow,  
 To guard the diadem the Cæsar wore,  
 Nor arms, nor succour to the Romans bore.  
 The Goth vain missives to the monarch sent,  
 Then on thro' Umbria with his legions went ;  
 And breathing wrath—despising lesser prey,  
 On Rome advanced by the Flaminian Way.  
 As he drew near with his barbarian host,  
 Thro' famed abodes, which Rome might proudly boast,  
 Th' Eternal City—Forum of the world,  
 Broke on his view with standards high unfurled.  
 He gazed exulting on that mighty scene,  
 Where Roman gods and heroes long had been ;  
 Where wealth, where trophies, famous thro' all time,  
 Spoke of the wrongs of many a subject clime.

Arches stood there, memorials of her fame,  
 On which was blazoned each barbaric name  
 That Rome had conquered in her long career,  
 And bred the Goth to deeds of wrath and fear ;  
 Tho' spoils of war from ravaged nations won,  
 Attesting well what her proud arms had done.  
 Beneath those walls which time's decay had spared,  
 He now encamped, and for the siege prepared.  
 A widowed empire trembled at his feet,  
 All unexpectant such a foe to greet.  
 Her gods were gone, and mightier shrines were there,  
 But shielded not, nor soothed her wild despair.  
 A thousand years of conquest and command,  
 Her sway had borne o'er many a subject land ;—  
 The earth she conquered, strewed with hostile bones,  
 And had grown old upon her hundred thrones :—  
 And yet the Goth was not so dire a foe  
 As Rome had vanquished in an hour of woe,  
 In her young days, before corruption's blight  
 Fell on her legions, and her men of might.  
 Alaric paused—not so the Gauls had done,  
 In times long gone, when they that course had run ;  
 These wild barbarians, in their pagan wrath,  
 Spread fire and slaughter on their fearful path ;  
 From icy thresholds of that glorious clime,  
 They darkened Italy with many a crime.  
 The walls of Rome their savage arms surround, }  
 And patriot Romans, to their country bound, }  
 No safety sought, save what their valor found. }  
 There died the Gauls ;—tho' Rome was wrapp'd in flame ;  
 The great Camillus' final triumph came.  
 This was Rome's glory ; and her great career  
 Soon taught proud foes her infant strength to fear.  
 And now six centuries had passed away,  
 Since the fierce Hannibal, in proud array,

To Rome had marched, displayed his martial pride,  
 But paused in doubt by the swift Annio's tide :—  
 Tho' still victorious in each field of fame,  
 Tho' breathing wrath he straight from Cannæ came,  
 The Carthaginian was compelled to halt,  
 Before those ramparts which defied assault.  
 Could none be found like those great men of old,  
 Rome's haughty name and glory to uphold ?  
 To hurl the proud barbarian in dismay,  
 From walls which checked the victor on that day ?  
 Yes, some were there ; but her last hour had come,  
 And men were awed by an impending doom.

Alaric sued, some say, for peace in vain,  
 Since there encamped for days he did remain ;  
 Till his wild legions and their chieftains too,  
 For the assault to fierce impatience grew.  
 Encompassed round by the barbarian host,  
 Degenerate Rome gave proof that she had lost  
 The haughty spirit and the dauntless soul,  
 Which breathed defiance and ne'er brooked control ;  
 Which proved the hope forlorn ere made to yield  
 To human foe upon the patriot field.  
 Disease and famine came and dark despair,  
 While youth and age and manhood perished there.  
 Resistance still some feebly sought to make,  
 And oft from dreams and stupor seemed to wake ;  
 Yet many deemed, all hoped, alas ! in vain,  
 That from such crime Alaric would abstain ;—  
 That his revenge would falter in that hour  
 Of last assault upon the Roman power.

The sun went down with fiery beam that day,  
 And left the earth to darkness and dismay :  
 Vast, lurid clouds obscured the eastern sky,  
 And soon deep night descended from on high ;



A rayless gloom hung in the breathless air,  
While captive winds their fury all prepare ;  
Slowly the hum of nations died away  
On that last night of Rome's imperial sway,  
And boding tempests weighed on every heart,  
While coming woe did warning fears impart.  
'Tis midnight and the seven-crowned city sleeps,  
And his lone watch the Roman soldier keeps,  
For many a league deep silence reigned around,  
And earth's repose was startled by no sound.  
But hark there strikes upon the ear of night,  
The sound of armies gathering in their might,  
To the assault by warlike chieftains led,  
Barbarian legions move with measured tread.  
At every post was placed a veteran guard,  
Which mounts the ramparts for defence prepared :  
While round and near soon swept the savage foe,  
And sprang with fury from the space below ;  
But Roman legions (some were stationed there)  
Received the Goth with fierce and stern despair ;  
The raging myriads, surging to the wall,  
Encountered swords no danger could appal.  
Along those proud and vast defences then  
Was heard the clang of arms, the strife of men  
In deadly conflict ; down the foe was hurled  
From that last bulwark of the Roman world.  
On the dark battlements now dyed with blood,  
Victorious still the Roman legions stood.  
But now the Goths, apprized by cruel fate,  
Impetuous rushed through an unguarded gate.  
Onward, still onward with loud shouts they bore,  
And all went down that sudden rush before.  
The Gothic trump the city woke from sleep ;  
Men seized their arms and women rose to weep ;

The rushing winds approached with deafening roar,  
And the wild storm resistless fury bore ;  
Blazed the red lightning with refulgent flash,  
Then shot the thunder with o'erwhelming crash,  
And echoing to the hills, proclaimed afar  
That Rome had fallen beneath the arm of war.  
Far, wild and stern, terrific to the last,  
Swept the loud din of conflict on the blast.  
O'erpowered by numbers, but 'mid heaps of slain,  
The legions fought, resisted there in vain.  
Thro' ruin, carnage, ravage and dismay,  
The towering Goth made his unfaltering way :  
Soon flames broke forth in many a glorious scene,  
Where princely homes and fairest hopes had been ;  
The wrath of Heaven and the rage of man  
And dread barbarians shouting in the van,  
All mingled there upon that night of doom,  
Deepening the terrors of that hideous gloom,  
Deluge of death ! of fire and blood and rain,  
Blighting the victims who might still remain,  
To curse the sun which brought the morning light,  
And mourn thro' years the horrors of that night.  
The exulting foe, relentless in his ire,  
Beheld the glories of proud Rome expire :  
Monuments of fame, the trophies of her power,  
Of vanished ages the immortal dower,  
Were hurled to earth, were trampled in the dust,  
With virtue, beauty, victims to man's lust ;  
Handmaids and slaves to cheer the savage mood  
Of fierce barbarians, drunk with Roman blood.  
The cruel Goth, the child of wilder climes,  
Of wintry regions, and disastrous times,  
Let loose those passions which appal mankind,  
And leave despair, and nameless woe behind.

Resistance ceased and supplications rose  
 From Roman lips to Rome's unpitied foes,  
 And vows and prayers were wafted to the skies,  
 From captive millions 'neath the conqueror's eyes.  
 Yet Alaric rescued by his stern command,  
 Each holy place from their rapacious hand ;  
 Churches and shrines where God was then adored,  
 Were shielded thus from the destroying sword.  
 But smoking ruins and wild cries of woe  
 Attested still the fury of the foe.  
 Long Rome had stood, had swayed thro' many an age,  
 And her bright deeds have pictured many a page.  
 Barbarians seized her sceptre and her crown ;  
 Her day was done ; and her last sun went down }  
 O'er wasted realms of empire and renown.  
 On Alaric marched and in Calabria died,  
 But Prince Adolphus soon his place supplied :—  
 He with Honorius first a treaty made,  
 And then to Gaul his martial legions led.  
 Of weak Honorius, at the siege of Rome,  
 A sister loved had met a captive's doom ;  
 Placidia named ; she with the Goths had gone,  
 Whose courteous bearing gently did atone  
 For outrage offered to illustrious birth,  
 To one renowned for beauty and for worth.  
 But on their way, Placidia in her pride,  
 Was by Adolphus made his royal bride.  
 In those dark times her noble name appears,  
 Excites to wonder, and then melts to tears ;  
 But the young Goth enslaved her tender heart,  
 And she to him would Roman thoughts impart.  
 Then, thro' her love, the Goth in deed and name  
 The last defender of her race became.  
 But soon Adolphus slumbered cold and low,  
 In youth struck down by an assassin's blow.

Then followed wars thro' ravaged Gaul and Spain,  
 While Rome essayed her sceptre to regain.  
 Europe, Asia, Afric's swarthy climes,  
 And ocean isles, wept those disastrous times.  
 While on the West the shades of night descend,  
 And warring hosts the falling empire rend ;—  
 As fiercer now the raging tempest blow,  
 And o'er the earth a thicker darkness grew ;—  
 As wave on wave of the barbarian flood  
 O'erwhelmed the Romans in despair and blood,  
 Britannia ceased Rome's mandates to obey,  
 And slowly drifted from the wreck away.  
 The warlike rulers, the imperial force  
 Which long had shielded her triumphal course,  
 Had been recalled to many a bloody field,  
 In Southern lands, where valor still must yield  
 To stern invaders, who in countless hosts,  
 Swept o'er fair realms, around immortal coasts,  
 Where Rome's lost splendor 'neath her sunlit skies  
 And starry nights, in time-worn ruin lies.  
 Then this fair isle was left to ruder foes,  
 Who round her shores from wilder regions close.  
 A Rescript came, by which her chiefs were taught  
 That by themselves their safety must be sought,  
 That to protect them on this distant shore,  
 The Roman legions could return no more.  
 Not by revolt her independence came,  
 For Rome no more could her allegiance claim :  
 In after times the Romans sent her aid,  
 And she in turn Rome's efforts had repaid ;  
 'Mid later years, when other hordes o'erran  
 Her prostrate thrones, and spoiled the works of man,  
 The British rulers warlike levies sent  
 And to the empire arms and succor lent.

The British chiefs, thus left to their own fate,  
 Combined their efforts to defend the state :  
 For soon both Picts and Scots the realm assailed,  
 With hordes of Irish ; oft their arms prevailed.  
 The Roman colonists, long settled there,  
 Stern struggle made in that disastrous war ;  
 They and the Britons mutual succor sought,  
 And firm, united, with invaders fought ;  
 Yet both were vanquished, driven in dismay,  
 By northern tribes, on many a fatal day.  
 Then Vortigern, his levies put to flight,  
 To aid his arms, the Saxons did invite.  
 Hengist and Horsa, other chieftains too,  
 Assistance gave when perils round him grew ;  
 The Saxons, Angles, Jutes, their stock the same,  
 From the dark Cimbrian Chersonesus came ;  
 In bands they ravaged every fertile shore,  
 And kindred tribes with them like fury bore.  
 Marauding chiefs, with battle-axe and spear,  
 And blood-red hands, in wrath would oft appear, }  
 And round far coasts with pirate squadrons steer ; }  
 Giants in form, of savage souls possess,  
 Their depredations other lands infest.  
 For years the Saxons for the Britons fought,  
 But soon rewards and settlements they sought ;  
 To Vortigern they lent their warlike strength,  
 And Picts and Scots were driven back at length.  
 'Tis said Rowena, Hengist's beauteous child,  
 Had by her charms the British Prince beguiled :  
 Fair Kent he ceded to the Saxon Prince,  
 His trust, his love too blindly to evince :  
 But now long wars, with all their train of woes,  
 Between the Britons and the Saxons rose :  
 The Angles, Jutes soon joined that fearful race,  
 Whose deeds of blood thro' dismal times we trace.

In Britain ruled two nations of renown,  
 And for great deeds thro' centuries had been known.  
 The Logrian tribes had swayed the fertile East,  
 While the proud Cambrians held the wilder West.  
 Between their chiefs, from ages then afar,  
 Had long prevailed stern rivalry in war :  
 Their cruel strife, in many a bloody scene  
 Of mutual weakness, fatal cause had been.  
 Conquerors fiercer than the Romans' mood,  
 O'erwhelmed their feuds in rapine, flame, and blood.  
 For the proud Ida with his Angles came  
 And set the region round the Tweed in flame ;  
 Before his arms the vanquished Britons fled,  
 While o'er the north his stern dominion spread.  
 Northumbria there, and there Bernicia lay,  
 Where dwelt the Britons from an earlier day ;  
 Deira, too, soon yielded to rude foes,  
 And there the kingdom of proud Sella rose :—  
 An Anglian chieftain, one of great renown,  
 Who made that region subject to his crown.  
 Then Cridda came and formed the Mercian state,  
 Whose warlike sway far glories did await ;  
 Renewed invasions of the Saxon host,  
 Swept round the isle, invested every coast ;  
 First Kent they made a colony, a home,  
 And other tribes invited then to come.  
 Fierce Effa, Ella, Cerdic, Kenrick's bands  
 Drove the rude natives to remoter lands.  
 And other chiefs did south and east despoil,  
 And to the Severn held Britannia's soil.  
 The Logrian race was vanquished in the east,  
 And their wide lands the Saxon now possest.  
 Ambrosius first, then other chiefs, in vain  
 Thro' that dark period battled to maintain

The British arms victorious o'er the foe  
 Who on their country brought such boundless woe ;  
 But these all perished by barbarian hand,  
 And died defending an exhausted land.  
 These heroes slain, the Cambrian kings assailed,  
 Still o'er the Saxons in the field prevailed.

King Arthur now the Western throne ascends,  
 And meteor light his great career attends ;  
 His country's glory long he had maintained,  
 And bloody battles o'er the Saxon gained.  
 Prolonged resistance ever 'gainst him rose,  
 Both from his own and from his country's foes.  
 Carleon sur Usk, far famed for splendor then,  
 Was his abode and that of warlike men ;  
 Clime of soft streams, the mountain and the heath,  
 Which sent her heroes to the field of death ;  
 Land of the Cymry, where the tempest roars  
 Thro' wintry nights around her rock-bound shores.  
 Times of proud chivalry, heroic deeds,  
 Of Merlin's magic and discordant creeds,  
 Of Lancelot, Gawaine and Caradoc,  
 Of Carduel's glory, and Pendragon's rock.  
 Weird mystic shadows darkly hang around  
 The grave which he the Cambrian hero found.  
 From wounds he died, 'tis said, in battle-field,  
 Where his own kindred all their hate revealed ;  
 His grave was made, some say, in lonely isle,  
 Between the shores where Brue's bright waters smile.  
 Thro' many a year his loss the Britons mourn,  
 Thro' many a year they wait for his return ;  
 Yet he comes not, that prince of knightly fame ;  
 But time and glory have embalmed his name.  
 In dust he sleeps, 'mid ruins of his race,  
 And history now can scarce his deeds retrace.

He was a light, a hope, in those sad times  
 Of fierce invasion and remorseless crimes.  
 This Cambrian hero died upon the soil  
 The Saxons sought to ravage and despoil.  
 Romance and history, tales of wonder tell  
 Of Cymrian lands his sword defended well ;  
 And how the British monarch warred and died,  
 O'ercome by foes his arms so long defied.

The Saxons now swept o'er the vanquished race,  
 And laid all prostrate, leaving not a trace  
 Of Roman life and civilization there,  
 While Roman wealth did like destruction share, }  
 Save what was wrung by rapine from despair. }  
 The conquered Britons felt their cruel rage,  
 While no submission could their wrath assuage.  
 Then in their fury, oft 'mid dire alarms,  
 They fighting died by fratricidal arms.  
 With carnage strewed o'er mountain, plain and shore,  
 The soil for years was dyed in human gore.  
 And heathen darkness settled thro' the land,  
 O'er all the ruin made by ruthless hand.  
 But darkest hour of still the gloomiest night  
 Precedes the dawn of morn's benignant light,  
 And longest twilight ushers in the day,  
 That shines o'er earth with most effulgent ray.

To warlike Ethelbert, great king of Kent,  
 Pope Gregory now a holy mission sent ;  
 The monk Augustine true religion taught,  
 And to the Saxons sacred words were brought.  
 A Christian light soon dawned o'er all the isle,  
 And blest men's souls with gentler ray the while ;  
 But even so, these years were years of blood,  
 And pagan error still the truth withstood.  
 For proud Britannia these were evil times,  
 And royal names were stained with fearful crimes.



Thro' the eight kingdoms of the Saxon race,  
 Were deeds of blood no time could e'er efface :  
 Between their monarchs cruel wars arose,  
 With little respite and with rare repose.  
 Great numbers perished by assassin's hand,  
 And murder, vengeance, prowled o'er all the land ;  
 Yet many fell in deeds of arms elate,  
 With sword in hand, by less ignoble fate.  
 To none in war did Edwin, Oswald, yield,  
 Yet these great kings both died on battle-field.  
 The famous Penda, warrior of renown,  
 The sway extended of the Mercian crown :  
 His sword of wrath, and sanguinary soul  
 Defied alike all law and all control.  
 Far, near, around, he smote both friend and foe  
 And filled the realm with havoc, fear and woe ;  
 But Oswio's arm by Winwyd's glassy stream  
 Smote the destroyer in his bloody dream.  
 Great Penda fled from slaughter and defeat,  
 All wildly on that first and last retreat :  
 But men pursued, in many a conflict tried,  
 Who seized and slew the mighty homicide.  
 The Mercian host was swept in blood away,  
 And vengeance came for murdered kings that day.  
 Long years then fled, dark times of storm and change,  
 Of fierce dissension, crimes both wild and strange.  
 After this night of ages thus forlorn,  
 Far o'er the land there broke a brighter morn ;  
 Such mighty chaos gems of greatness bore,  
 Long planted there thro' centuries before.  
 Out of this wreck of creeds o'erwhelmed there,  
 Of civilization, nations in despair, }  
 When time and peace the ruin did repair,  
 Three kingdoms rose to past traditions true,  
 And more united ancient England grew.

Each by great wars, by deeds of wrong defiled,  
Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, they were styled.

In rude Northumbria's annals we may find  
The greatest crimes that desolate mankind :  
Murder was there, dark perfidy deforms  
The early story of that realm of storms.  
We sicken o'er the tale too often told  
Of princes slain, of treason fierce and bold :  
From these we turn to things of brighter fame,  
To men, to deeds, which glorify her name.  
Two pious scholars in those times remote,  
Upon that land a great renown had brought.  
Both Bede and Alcuin, natives of that clime,  
Have left a glory brightning thro' all time ;  
They stand like beacons on the sullen shore,  
Where raging billows, midnight tempests, roar,  
Or like two stars of rays serenely bright  
Seen in the skies thro' broken clouds of night.  
The cloud bears on, the heaven is lost to view,  
The storm descends, but it will vanish too :  
Yet they shine forth, and they their lessons teach,  
From heights afar no storms of earth can reach.  
Thro' Western Europe and with just renown  
These two great names were well and widely known ;  
They lived both honored in their day and time,  
And spread their fame thro' many a distant clime.

In Mercia then the famous Offa reigned,  
A great renown his valiant arms attained ;  
For he was chief of all the Saxon land,  
And swayed supreme and with a mighty hand ;  
But awful crimes have clouded his great name,  
And left a shade upon his lofty fame.  
Young Ethelbert, who held a humbler sway  
O'er all East Anglia which ne'er Mercia lay,

Eldrida's hand in honored marriage sought,  
 And to the Princess costly offerings brought.  
 The daughter she of Offa the renowned,  
 Whose name till then with glory had been crowned.  
 Within the palace, lured by friendly guise,  
 In feasts and merriment the long day flies ;  
 At midnight' hour, and sunk in youth's repose,  
 In death's dull sleep his eyes for ever close.  
 He fell a victim to Cyndrida's hate,  
 Who later mourned this youth's untimely fate :  
 The fair Eldrida, from that fatal day,  
 Within a cloister pined her hopes away.  
 And Offa's and Cyndrida's ruthless crimes,  
 Have left them infamous to later times.

In cruel wars that long and fiercely raged,  
 At home, abroad, had Wessex been engaged.  
 'Twere needless here these feats of arms to state,  
 Or fierce revolts, dissensions to relate.  
 It was the land of Cerdic's glorious race,  
 Whose kingly rule thro' ages we may trace ;  
 It shines afar, tho' oft obscured by crimes,  
 Down to King Edward the Confessor's times.  
 The throne now vacant, briefly so remained,  
 But by election soon a monarch reigned ;  
 Brithric the Saxon the high honor won,  
 And his short reign of glory then begun.  
 As youthful scion of great Cerdic's line,  
 Of all the thanes the votes he did combine ;  
 The throne he filled with honor and renown,  
 And shed new lustre on West Sussex crown.  
 His Queen Edburga, whose ambitious soul  
 Swayed Brithric's court with dark, unchecked control,  
 Was Offa's daughter, and for guilt and shame,  
 To after times hath left a fearful name.

For beauty famed thro' all the Saxon land,  
 This Princess slew with a relentless hand  
 A noble thane, and Warre the name he bore,  
 Who did her consort's warmest friendship share.  
 The fair Edburga, roused by jealous rage,  
 Did 'gainst his life in foul design engage ;  
 The poisoned wine (but few such deed had dared)  
 In golden goblet her own hand prepared.  
 To the fair youth, the first among the brave,  
 The Queen with smiles the fatal potion gave ;  
 The princely Brithric with a joyful look,  
 The fatal cup from his young favorite took.  
 Within the goblet half the wine remained,  
 Which to the dregs the youthful monarch drained ;  
 The Princess saw, with horror all inert,  
 That the dread act she could not now avert.  
 O'er her fair brow, as Brithric gasped for breath,  
 A pallor came like hues of early death ;  
 Who did the deed, tho' none the truth could tell,  
 Yet on the Queen a dire suspicion fell.  
 They both had perished by some cruel hand,  
 And this proclaimed, she fled her native land.  
 From Charlemagne, who ruled o'er mighty states,  
 She safety sought from stern avenging fates.  
 But in a convent by that Prince confined,  
 In close seclusion she in secret pined ;  
 Still her lost soul no sacred rules could bind, }  
 Where contrite hearts a blest repentance find. }  
 Defiant, proud, by passion fiercely swayed,  
 The exiled Princess hideous vice displayed ;  
 With spirit broken and with blighted name,  
 She was expelled for deeds of foulest shame :  
 Without a hope to cheer, or hand to guide,  
 Proud Offa's child, by all abandoned, died.

Young Egbert then a Prince of rising fame,  
 Did Cerlie's throne by right of lineage claim ;  
 A scion he of that illustrious line,  
 Which did far glories of the past combine.  
 And Wessex grew beneath his sovereign sway,  
 Which from the first high wisdom did display :  
 And this fair isle by long convulsions torn—  
 By cruel wars divided and forlorn,  
 In peace and wealth, in strength and union grew,  
 And this great Prince did England's hopes renew :  
 First Mercia's king, the warlike and the proud,  
 To the great monarch's firm dominion bowed ;  
 Then wild Northumbria struggled but in vain,  
 It's ancient freedom sternly to regain ;  
 For vast achievements Egbert did attend,  
 And o'er all rivals did his rule extend.  
 As King he reigned o'er all the Saxon land,  
 Which long he governed with supreme command.  
 Four hundred years and more had rolled away,  
 Since o'er the isle had ceased the Roman sway ;  
 And near as many since the Saxon hosts  
 Disaster spread along these fertile coasts.  
 Ages of woe which scarce could hope inspire,  
 While in that night of man's barbarian ire,  
 Rome's arts had perished to revive no more,  
 With their first splendor, on this distant shore.  
 Her cities, wealth, her laws, religion too,  
 Lie buried here, as thicker darkness grew, }  
 O'er many a land, where once her eagles flew }  
 Along the march of her triumphant power,  
 In her aggressive and all-conquering hour.  
 From what disasters, suffering then arose,  
 That light of hope which dawned on Albion's woes !  
 Cruel ambition, rivalries of race,  
 On history's page in sadness we may trace.

While savage hordes, both strong and fierce in war,  
 O'er all the realm their proud dominion bore.  
 But now once more religion's holy light,  
 Dispersed the horrors of that pagan night ;  
 And midst the woes which fell upon those times,  
 Softened the fury of barbarian crimes :  
 And Albion grew united in her strength,  
 And seemed secure in peace, repose at length.

But now alas ! in warlike hosts appear,  
 The pirate Danes, and fill the land with fear.  
 From snowy wastes on Scandinavian shores,  
 From isles round which the wintry Baltic roars,  
 Like the fierce Saxons of remoter times,  
 These savage warriors sought more genial climes.  
 Borne by their fleets o'er ocean's wide domain,  
 Those great sea-kings wide empire did maintain.  
 Long with the Saxons bloody wars they waged,  
 And wild adventures all their strength engaged.  
 Against this isle they expeditions made,  
 But for a time invasion had been stayed :  
 To France and Spain triumphant arms they bore,  
 And round all Europe ravaged every shore.  
 The Mediterranean's fair and affluent isles,  
 Where every season in succession smiles,  
 And rich dominions in Italian climes,  
 By them were seized and ruled in later times.  
 The south of England they did now assail,  
 And in marauding oftimes did prevail.  
 At Hergstone Hill, King Egbert met the foe,  
 And on that field laid the invader low.  
 Victorious there, this great achievement won,  
 This monarch died—his long career was run.  
 Then Ethelwolf his son the war maintained,  
 And bloody battles o'er the Northmen gained.

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After long years successful 'gainst the Dane,  
 This famous Prince, a better world to gain,  
 To Rome repaired, and sought his soul's repose,  
 Of fame forgetful and his country's woes.  
 Thence on his way, to Paris being called,  
 Judith he wooed, the child of Charles the Bald.  
 No great achievement marked his later reign,  
 Tho' he too died unconquered by the Dane.

Ethelbold his son succeeded to the crown,  
 A man of war and of a vast renown :  
 His father's Queen he sought to make his bride,  
 And he and Judith sacred laws defied.  
 When to these nuptials hope could not attain,  
 Her native land the Princess sought again.  
 But from her father's halls frail Judith fled,  
 And took a menial, Baldwin, to her bed.  
 The aged king, both daughter and the boy  
 Sought in his wrath to punish or destroy ;  
 But when their capture could not be achieved.  
 Pursuit he ceased—his pardon they received.  
 Then on this Baldwin to avert disgrace,  
 The crown of Flanders he agreed to place ;  
 And from this union in direct descent,  
 Altho' great names had lasting glory lent,  
 The fair Matilda, William's haughty bride,  
 Her lineage drew, and mighty race supplied.  
 And Ethelbold lived glorious thro' his reign,  
 And died in age, still struggling with the Dane.

Succeeding him king Ethelbert now reigned,  
 But slight the glory which his sway attained ;  
 And greater woes fell darkly on the land,  
 While this last monarch held supreme command.  
 The pirate Danes invasion did renew,  
 And to these shores fresh hordes of rapine drew ;

With them came Ludbrog ; then in bloody fight,  
 The Danes and Saxons proved their martial might.  
 The fierce invaders were compelled to yield,  
 And Ludbrog perished—not on battle-field.  
 To Saxon vengeance he a victim fell,  
 Which was repaid,—repaid, alas ! too well.  
 Then other Danes, fierce sea-kings of renown,  
 Assailed the land, assailed each Saxon crown.  
 On vengeance bent, the sons of Ludbrog came,  
 With rapine seized, destroyed with sword and flame.  
 Far o'er the rude and still divided north,  
 These dire barbarians poured their fury forth ;  
 By Osbert, Ella, they were soon assailed,  
 But in this war the cruel Dane prevailed.  
 Near York's great city, on a fatal day,  
 They met in battle's dread and stern array :  
 Beneath those walls where each the foe had sought,  
 Those mighty combatants, to fury wrought,  
 Deluged that field of slaughter and renown,  
 With blood until the summer sun went down.  
 By Ella's sword fierce Ludbrog had been slain,  
 And now his sons sought vengeance to obtain ;  
 The Saxons yielded—Ella then was seized,  
 By men whom slaughter had not yet appeased.  
 'Twere needless here to pause or to depict  
 The cruel death their vengeance did inflict.  
 Onward they marched with rapine's deeds of wrath,  
 And wide destruction spread upon their path.  
 Till Croyland's Abbey pillaged, set on fire,  
 Saw reverend monks in agony expire.  
 Northumbria first and fertile Mercia then,  
 With fair East Anglia, each resists in vain.  
 The North they conquered, made its soil their own,  
 Where Anglian tribes to sway and power had grown ;



'Mid smiling lands, and thro' each sacred scene,  
 E'en to the South their ravages had been.  
 There churches, convents, monasteries went down,  
 Where'er the footsteps of their march were known.  
 Rapine, despair, far o'er the realm they bore,  
 And desolation spread from shore to shore.  
 The cruel Dane with a remorseless hand,  
 Bore fire and sword thro' all the bleeding land:  
 On every coast renewed descents were made,  
 While deeds too cruel their revenge displayed.  
 Amid those wars which few bright deeds atone,  
 Alfred the Great ascends the English throne;  
 King Ethelwolf and Queen Osberga's son,  
 Whose life of war, of peril, now begun.  
 Of Penda's race whose dark renown had spread,  
 A lovely daughter the young Prince had wed,—  
 The fair Alswitha, whose all-peerless name,  
 Is blended brightly with the hero's fam .  
 Called to the throne in danger's darkest hour,  
 Soon he confronts the Dane's destroying power;  
 Perils too dire thro' many a scene he bore,  
 While fierce invaders swarmed round every shore.  
 All lay o'erwhelm'd in that woeful day,  
 And yielded slowly to the Northmen's sway.  
 Fresh Danish squadrons with their hosts arrived,  
 Yet England's hopes young Alfred soon revived;  
 With fierce Hælfdene a battle soon was sought,  
 But fell destruction on his arms was brought.  
 Fierce Gothurn then, who long great chief had been,  
 With wild ambition stood upon the scene.  
 A thousand perils Alfred's throne surround,  
 Nor for defence could fitting force be found:  
 Retreating first before the furious Dane,  
 Escape he sought, but all his hopes were vain;

Vanquished, o'erthrown by a complete defeat,  
 In Ethlingay he found a safe retreat.  
 From this concealment he at length withdrew,  
 And to his standard faithful subjects flew ;  
 By Odun's sword proud Ubbo had been slain,  
 And then was seized the banner of the Dane.  
 Then followed war's dire carnage in the field,  
 But to the Dane the Saxon n'er would yield ;  
 At Ethandune, on proud and patriot day,  
 Two mighty armies met in fierce array.  
 The Saxons, Danes, for empire there contend,  
 And to that conflict all their fury lend.  
 Upon a hill king Alfred had arrayed  
 His warlike host, and marshal skill displayed.  
 A wood far stretching on his guarded rear,  
 Affords protection both secure and near :—  
 The Saxon Prince with anxious look below,  
 Views the array of the advancing foe.  
 From every station on his bloody course,  
 The warlike Gothurn called in all his force.  
 The day before that mighty conflict there,  
 The rival hosts their armèd ranks prepare.  
 With guards advanced, and thro' the watch of night,  
 They silent wait the dread, approaching fight.  
 So soon as dawn had broken in the sky,  
 Their warlike banners, far as reach of eye,  
 Floated aloft the dreadful lines along,  
 And bands of heroes round their standards throng.  
 With burning ray the summer sun arose,  
 O'er fierce, embattled and impatient foes.  
 The fiery Gothurn, eager for the fray,  
 Made first assault upon that fatal day.  
 Against the foe, arrayed in dreadful lines,  
 The centre column he at first combines ;

Onward they march with stern and measured tread,  
To the assault by mighty chieftains led.  
Soon came the shock ; then rose upon the air  
Loud shouts of conflict and of wild despair ;  
The Danes must yield to a still mightier foe,  
And in disorder sought the plain below.  
Again renewed, a fierce assault was made,  
Again, again the dread advance was stayed ;  
At length borne down by Alfred where they stood,  
The teeming earth was dyed with human blood.  
Awhile both armies held their fiery breath,—  
A pause ensued upon that field of death ;  
Then ranks were closed—stern voices fill the air,  
And armèd nations for the shock prepare.  
Dread hour of fate : with stern and anxious eye,  
Resolved to conquer and prepared to die,  
Near England's standard with outstretched hand,  
The Saxon monarch gave his quick command  
To warlike chieftains, mindful of their woes,  
And bounding now with fury on their foes.  
They meet in slaughter, arms are dyed with gore,  
No sound is heard but battle's sullen roar ;  
The carnage deepens, gory heaps lie slain,  
And boundless horror fills th' ensanguined plain ;  
Direst vengeance, patriot hopes, control,  
Alternate sway and fire each Saxon's soul.  
The Danes give way ; their ranks no more sustain,  
That fiery onslaught sought by them in vain.  
Then on their rear, and from his chosen post,  
The English monarch hurls his patriot host.  
Onward they press—stern Gothurn fled away,  
In far retreat upon that dreadful day ;  
The Danes, pursued and slaughtered by the foe,  
Repaid in part an age of wrath and woe.

Then peace ensued, repose for many a year,  
 And Danes and Saxons allied soon appear.  
 Great power by sea, king Alfred did create,  
 And his proud kingdom raised from fallen state.  
 Long years elapsed, till Hastings, a sea-king,  
 Did on the land renewed disasters bring.  
 The wasting wars which desolated Gaul,  
 Causing dark ruin, words would not recall,  
 Threatened the isle with rapine, fire and blood,  
 Had not the Saxon well the storm withstood.  
 From Gallic ports, two pirate squadrons sailed,  
 And o'er the perils of the deep prevailed ;  
 But Alfred foiled them in their dread career,  
 Of savage, slaughter, thro' that night of fear.  
 France they fled to pillage as before,  
 But sought proud England to despoil no more.  
 Great Alfred now had reached immortal fame,  
 And spread afar the terror of his name :  
 Old in years and worn with many a care,  
 His soul he must for other scene prepare ;  
 And then there died a man of lofty mind,  
 Lawgiver, statesman, warrior—all combined.  
 Time passed away—the Danes from other lands,  
 As fierce invaders came in pirate bands :  
 Along the sea, around each fertile shore,  
 The Northman's fury smote the isle once more ;  
 Till Athelstane, a prince of vast renown,  
 Shed brighter glory on the English crown.  
 The proffered sceptre of supreme command  
 Was wielded proudly by that warlike hand :  
 Successful wars he waged against the Dane,  
 Who long a bloody contest would maintain.  
 At Brunenburgh, on carnage's blood field,  
 The fierce invaders were compelled to yield.

Those ruthless hordes the furious Anlaff led,  
 Against a foe in deeds of glory bred :  
 He met their legions on that famous day  
 And smote and swept them with his sword away :  
 The sun went down upon that scene of blood,  
 For long the Dane the Saxon had withstood.  
 Then king of England Athelstane became,  
 And glorious reigned with still increasing fame.  
 Illustrious monarchs followed that great Prince,  
 Who in the field their valor did evince.  
 Still northern tribes, invasion did renew,  
 And oft the Saxons by their arms o'erthrew.  
 All words were vain to tell what England bore,  
 For like disasters ne'er were known before ;  
 Such boundless woes as time could scarce repair,  
 And all the realm was merged in dark despair.  
 King Ethelred at length ascends the throne,  
 When darkest perils thro' the land had grown.  
 Vast treasures oft he to the Northmen paid,  
 To purchase peace, that ruin might be stayed ;  
 But soon ensued that deed of guilt and woe,  
 By which the Danes in England were laid low.  
 St. Bridget's day was marked by scenes of blood,  
 Nor thro' all time hath fouler record stood.  
 As great communities the Danes were known,  
 And true allegiance to the laws had shown.  
 Despite their fathers' violence and crimes,  
 New generations, thro' succeeding times,  
 Had with the Saxons in communion dwelt,  
 And for the land sincere attachment felt.  
 Now all unarmed and unsuspecting too,  
 These 'gainst their foes the sword of vengeance drew.  
 Nor age nor sex the treacherous Saxon spared,  
 But all alike their ruthless fury shared ;

There perished Palig, Northman of renown,  
 A famous traitor to the English crown.  
 His beautiful wife, Gunilhda was her name,  
 By her sad doom hath left a peerless fame;  
 The sister she of Sweyn the warlike Dane,  
 Who cruel wars in England did maintain:—  
 To other lay this mournful tale belongs.  
 But fired by vengeance at Gunilhda's wrongs,  
 He desolation spread thro' all the land,  
 And o'er the realm soon held supreme command.  
 At Bath he died in all his pomp and pride,  
 While warring hosts the kingdom still divide.  
 Long it was bruited that assassin's blow  
 That mighty Prince had secretly laid low.  
 Canute the Dane, this monarch's famous son,  
 His proud career of glory now begun;  
 King Ethelred, who reigned thro' times of woe,  
 Among dead kings was slumbering cold and low.  
 Ne'er had Britannia such disasters known,  
 As when subjected to this monarch's crown.  
 Edmund his son was at his death proclaimed,  
 That famous one who Ironsides was named.  
 'Tween him and Canute, who were ever foes,  
 A bloody contest for the throne arose;  
 Long wars ensued; on many a day of fame  
 They each sustained a bright and glorious name.  
 On Sorsteine's field their valor was displayed,  
 And long that conflict was in wrath delayed.  
 Two days and nights with boundless carnage there,  
 With fierce ambition, fury and despair,  
 Those warrior kings for empire did contend,  
 And thro' that fight their skill and valor blend.  
 Altho' the Dane sought safety in retreat,  
 From Edmund, he had not sustained defeat.

The war grew fiercer, marked by cruel hate ;  
 But still their fortunes balanced were by fate ;  
 Till that dark day, on Ashdown's field of death,  
 Where Canute won the conqueror's bloody wreath.  
 The moon shone forth in all her tender light,  
 Thro' the long hours, far thro' the azure night,  
 Calm o'er that fatal and ensanguined field,  
 Where to the Dane the Saxon now must yield.  
 The morning came ; to Edmund was revealed  
 What the wild tumult of the night concealed ;—  
 That his great chiefs were strewed upon the plain,  
 All buried there beneath vast heaps of slain :  
 Mingled with meaner dead their corpses lay,  
 The foremost victims of that dreadful day.  
 Victorious Canute had all foes o'ercome ;  
 And now in England made abiding home.  
 In Olney's isle a peace those Princes made,  
 By which the fury of their arms was stayed :—  
 But by assassin's blow soon Edmund died ;  
 Then Canute reigned alone in sovereign pride :  
 Of his great race first monarch of the land,  
 He ruled proud England with a warrior's hand.  
 Years rolled away, great Canute then became  
 The mightiest ruler of the Danish name ;  
 And o'er wide realms was borne his martial fame. }  
 He died : Harefoot, the fair Elgiva's son,  
 Succeeded him, but slight distinction won.  
 Then Hardicanute, his successor, reigned ;  
 The child of Emma, who two thrones had gained.  
 The daughter she, thro' mournful times well known,  
 Of Norman Richard, Prince of vast renown.  
 When Ethelred, the English monarch died,  
 His widowed Queen, soon humbled in her pride, }  
 In Normandy did for a time abide.

By Canute's choice this Princess had once more,  
 As Queen of England left the Norman shore.  
 Tho' deep in memory many a grief may dwell,  
 Yet youth, ambition, and the mighty spell;—  
 The lurid light around a conqueror's throne,  
 Bring other dreams, and melt her heart of stone, }  
 And make her soon her first-born's right disown. }  
 To Ethelred two royal sons she bore,—  
 Edward first, then Alfred slain before.  
 The former now the English throne ascends,  
 And o'er the realm his rightful sway extends.  
 From Cerdic's stock this monarch did descend,  
 And in his line did rival races blend;  
 The Norman, Saxon, Dane, in him were found,  
 And names ancestral with bright glory crowned.  
 Great Albion! thus thro' ages of despair,  
 Did woes unnumbered, boundless perils share.  
 Fierce warring races, men of many a land,  
 Her soil had trod with stern and high command;  
 The power of Rome, the arts of Roman life,  
 Had grown, had flourished on that scene of strife.  
 When these declined, and fierce barbarians came,  
 No trace they left of that all glorious name.  
 Stern, warlike sea-kings, and their pirate hosts,  
 Swept like tornadoes round these fertile coasts.  
 Forgotten relics, ashes of the slain  
 Of those who died, alas! too oft in vain,  
 Lie low entombed on her immortal shores,  
 Where the dark surge of sullen ocean roars.  
 The fierce invader and the patriot sleep,  
 In mingling dust along the hoary deep.  
 They fought, they died thro' rude and wrathful times,  
 And filled the world with echoes of their crimes.  
 Beneath the night of distant ages past,  
 Those giant foes unite in peace at last.



The blood that mingled in such fearful strife  
 Has flowed thro' time to feed a nobler life,  
 Blending in one the valiant and the free  
 Who rule afar the empires of the sea.  
 The tide of life, so proud in England's veins,  
 Descends from Britons, Saxons, and the Danes ;  
 And Normans too, infused in later times,  
 Great kindred races from the northern climes,—  
 Stern, vital energies transmitted down,  
 From stocks ancestral thro' long ages gone.  
 Nor should we here o'erlook the greater part,  
 By God's high word exerted on the heart.  
 The Druid creed an early refuge sought,  
 And here the errors of that creed had taught ;  
 Tho' still with ardor they their tenets held,  
 That ancient priesthood were at length expelled  
 By ruthless arms, by deities of Rome,  
 Who votaries found, proud temples and a home.  
 And these in turn recede before the light  
 Of Christian truth into eternal night.  
 Then northern worship, Scandinavian gods,  
 Usurped the faith throughout those famed abodes.  
 The Britons, Romans, Saxons, and the Danes  
 Knelt to dark shrines, adored in idol fanes ;  
 Till the bright sun of revelation shone  
 Far o'er a land of revolutions gone.

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## BOOK FIFTH.

### ARGUMENT.

Harold's return to England.—His interview with Edward the Confessor and his Queen Edith, Harold's sister.—The Prince gives an account of what befel him in Normandy.—Grief of Edward and Edith.—Harold attempts to vindicate himself to the King and Queen.—He is sent by King Edward to suppress the revolt of the Northumbrians against Tostig, brother of Harold.—Brief account of Earl Godwin, Harold's father.—Godwin's career, and short notice of his family.—Harold's march at the head of the Royal Forces.—His meeting with the mal-contented at Northampton.—The Northumbrians and their auxiliaries are led by the brothers Morcar and Edwin, son of Alfgar, Earl of Mercia.—Harold's interview with the revolted chieftains.—His remonstrance with them.—Speech of Oswald, a Thane of great influence among the Northumbrians, and who had caused Earl Morcar to be elected in the place of Tostig.—The rebels retire to Lincoln.—Harold sends for Tostig, who has remained at Oxford.—Violent scene between the two brothers.—Rupture between them.—Harold returns to London.—Advises the King to confirm Morcar's election.—This advice followed.—Pacification of Northumberland.—Tostig's threats and resentment at the supposed treachery of his brother.—His letter to Harold.—Flight of Tostig and his wife the Countess Judith, to the Court of Baldwin, Earl of Flanders.—Last illness of Edward the Confessor.—Interview between Edith, Harold, Stigand, and Aldred, Archbishop of York, and the dying Monarch.—His final dispositions respecting the succession to the Crown.—Last words to his Queen Edith.—His death.

Duke Harold now, from fatal thralldom free,  
With spreading sail, stood promptly out to sea :—  
His friends, young Haco and the Prince again,  
With joyful hearts go forth upon the main.  
The shores recede ; the far, unclouded skies  
In azure depths grow dim as daylight dies,

Myriads of stars come forth upon the night,  
 And o'er the world diffuse their tender light.  
 Full on their course, the trusty vessels keep:  
 Soft, fa'ring gales impel them o'er the deep.  
 The land was gone, and fading to the view,  
 Vague, indistinct the dark horizon grew.  
 Thro' hours of night, the ships auspicious fly,  
 And steer their course by beacon-lights on high.  
 Then came the morn; still on their way they bore,  
 And ere the night, they touched the English shore.

Great trials past, with soul infirm sustained,  
 Harold at length his native land regained.  
 Rejoicing now secure escape to make,  
 From hostile hands, with life and fame at stake.  
 There dark abyss before each step had yawned,  
 Nor scarce had hope amid those dangers dawned.  
 Power and wiles, with treachery combined,  
 Had awed, subdued his great intrepid mind;  
 Which ne'er till now had known a human fear,  
 Or once had faltered in his great career.  
 These dire events—the memories of them now  
 Far deeper gloom had stamped upon his brow,  
 And cast o'er all his proudest days to come,  
 The sombre shadows of a nation's doom;  
 Had brought dishonor on his mighty name,  
 And dimm'd the lustre of his former fame.

King Edward, anxious eager all to learn,  
 Thro' weary days awaited his return:  
 And Edith too, with fondest sister's love,  
 For him had prayed, to Heaven's great throne above.

To greet his sovereign Harold now repaired,  
 And without comment the whole truth declared.  
 The Monarch then thus mournfully expressed  
 The grief profound, the fears within his breast :  
 " I knew, alas ! Duke William's hopes too well,  
 And past experience, did these woes foretell.  
 Too much I feared thy journey thus would end ;  
 For this I sought another hence to send.  
 That mind astute, ambitious and profound,  
 Was ne'er by honor, or religion bound.  
 Relentless Prince ! long skilled in ev'ry art,  
 That to vast aims doth fatal strength impart ;  
 That oath on relies may not bind thy soul,  
 But o'er thy actions must exert control.  
 Throughout the world, where'er that act is known,  
 Men will proclaim thee false to England's throne,  
 And England too, and all the Saxon land,  
 And stamp they name with foul dishonor's brand ;—  
 That thou art bound by that strange promise given,  
 And to refuse, would insult be to Heaven.  
 Harold, alas ! I grieve that one renowned,  
 By oath so dire to Norman should be bound,  
 That thou the hero, chief of all our race,  
 'Mong warlike men, the first in fame and place ;  
 Great England's hope in every hour of need,  
 My own right arm in many a mighty deed ;  
 So great of soul, the bulwark of the state,  
 To be so lost, so bound by adverse fate !  
 Oh ! Prince foredoomed ! what self-reproach I bear,  
 Within this breast, so long oppressed with care !

Why did I yield in that ill-fated hour,  
 And send thee victim to the Norman's power ?  
 Ah! had I then imposed a stern command,  
 And stayed thy footsteps to that hostile land,  
 I'd proved my friendship to my race and thee,  
 And kept the sword of England's hero free.  
 But 'tis too late—unless we can divert  
 This tide of woe, or Heaven's wrath avert.  
 Stigand's deep thought, or Aldred's pious mind,  
 For such dread oath may some deliverance find."

With mien disturbed, but courage in his eye,  
 To Edward Harold made this prompt reply.  
 That mighty Prince, long famed in deeds of war,  
 And whose renown shone glorious and afar.  
 With fluent speech, with eloquence express'd,  
 The fervent thoughts that glowed within his breast ;—  
 His vivid words without an effort flowed,  
 And shades alike of thought and feeling show'd.  
 He, anxious now, and eager to convince,  
 Did thus the force of sophistry evince :  
 " Great King, my error fully I avow,  
 And your grave words are not forgotten now.  
 'Twere needless here to give more full detail  
 Of what occurred ; it could not now avail.  
 My acts are known. 'Tis painful to recall  
 How dread my peril and how great my fall.  
 The Norman Prince received us, as you know,  
 With courteous words, much kindness did bestow.  
 Still more had done : he ample ransom paid,  
 And generous efforts for our freedom made.

From Guy of Ponthieu's dungeons he redeemed  
My friends and me, and much incensed he seemed.  
Then at his court he warm reception gave,  
And us he greeted as became the brave.  
All eager sought, in kind and courtly way  
To you, to me, their deference to display ;  
Of you he spoke in terms of filial love,  
While all his acts did warmest friendship prove.  
Him I esteemed for all the love he bore,  
To you, my sovereign thro' long years before.  
Our brother Ulf, still absent, exiled there,  
The fondest object of a mother's prayer ;  
And Haco to, the orphan left forlorn,  
By outlawed father, and to sorrow born,  
Were objects dear, whose prompt release I sought,  
And to the Norman freely spoke each thought.  
Then my firm friends, so numerous and so loved,  
Who to this journey, for my sake were moved,  
All claimed my care, protection strong and sure,  
And 'gainst all perils I must them secure.  
Whate'er reproaches on my acts may fall,  
Their safety now with triumph I recall.  
Thus time had passed ; and thro' each varied scene,  
His princely bearing high and true had been.  
Altho' the Duke my confidence had shared,  
His vast designs were ne'er to me declared.  
By word—nor deed, had he his thoughts revealed,  
At least those hopes in his dark mind concealed.  
His friendship, glory, courteous acts bespoke,  
A chief too great, suspicion to awake.

Until that night upon St. Michael's peak,  
 No word of hope, of pledges did he speak.  
 You know how thoughtless, in the fatal hour,  
 I placed my freedom in the Norman's power.  
 Thence for my kinsman, for my friends and me,  
 Lay but one path by which we could go free.  
 Remote—surrounded and in durance bound,  
 For them and me a gloomy dungeon frowned.  
 Could I with honor, in that hostile clime,  
 Imperil them without a greater crime?  
 However much my weakness I may grieve,  
 With the fierce Norman, them I could not leave.  
 Had I resisted and refused to swear,  
 With me, 'tis certain, they had perished there.  
 To William then a hasty pledge I gave,  
 My friends, my kinsman and myself to save.  
 You know that promise, how I was betrayed  
 In that great council, where the oath was made.  
 The words pronounced, I ne'er as pledge had given,  
 But then constrained, I swore before High Heaven.  
 I deemed the wiles, the force he did employ,  
 Enough that oath to cancel and destroy.  
 If by compulsion—by constraint I swore,  
 What was the sanction such a vow could bear?  
 That oath in truth, had it been freely made,  
 A horrid crime upon my soul had laid.  
 But fully, firmly still I did believe  
 That from such bond, religion could relieve;  
 Thus then I deemed, and with this protest swore,  
 Unless approved, my oath no sanction bore,  
 And this to witness, God I did implore.



Not only thus was I compelled to swear,  
But a vile fraud in secret they prepare.  
Those sacred relics, which that shrine concealed,  
Were ne'er to me, till all too late revealed.  
Had aught in view, the fearful truth disclosed,  
That bones of saints beneath that cloth reposed,  
Ere I had sworn upon that holy shrine,  
I had far sooner lost this life of mine ;  
My friends, my kinsman, all had perished there,  
Ere such foul oath I had been brought to swear.  
Coereed, deceived, such vow can never bind,  
Tho' blame, dishonor it may leave behind.  
To force was added this perfidious fraud,  
An act which Normans scarcely could applaud :  
These were the wrongs by William thus imposed,  
Upon a kinsman helpless and exposed.  
In all this work of perfidy and shame,  
Can candid minds my actions loudly blame ?  
Can holy men, when this foul tale is known,  
And this deception all is fully shown,  
Prompt absolution from that pledge withhold,  
Nor rescue honor from a crime so bold ?  
Can any precept in God's law be found,  
Whereby such treason can, in truth, be bound ?  
If fraud and force be in his acts combined,  
Is there an oath, my forced assent can bind ?  
Treason's accursed in every place and time,  
Nor can an oath e'er sanctify a crime.  
If so, the laws which guide the faith of men,  
Are sent and taught to all our race in vain.

Man's moral sense such dogma would impeach ;  
 Our great divines would not such doctrine teach.  
 Besides I've sworn allegiance to a foe,  
 Of you and England, as you both should know.  
 The Norman waits for your demise alone,  
 And seeks assistance, ere your life be gone,  
 To wade thro' blood to England's mighty throne.  
 He grows impatient for the fatal hour,  
 Which may subject the kingdom to his power.  
 Deep plans are formed the Island to invade,  
 Before your choice can yet be freely made.  
 He hopes ere long your vacant throne to fill,  
 Whate'er the purport of your royal will.  
 Also despite young Edgar's better claims,  
 So ruthless he in his ambitious aims."

To whom thus Edward : " All thou hast declared  
 In part removes the fears which I have shared.  
 The Norman's baseness all unmasked appears,  
 But his designs still more excite my fears.  
 Yet may we hope ; not yet art thou so bound,  
 That from thy oath no rescue may be found."

The fair Queen Edith much this brother loved,  
 And these events her heart had greatly moved.  
 That generous Prince, firm friend of many a year,  
 To her had been, above all others, dear.  
 Tostig had once her gentle spirit swayed,  
 And by dark deed, that sister had betrayed.  
 'Twas a sad tale—perchance she was to blame,  
 For stain it left upon her peerless fame.

With mind adorned, with form and aspect fair,  
 Like some bright flower, she bloomed and faded there.  
 Mild as she was and free from worldly art,  
 She well had guessed the hopes of William's heart.  
 Her brother now she views with saddened brow,  
 While from her lips these faltering accents flow:  
 " My brother loved, the Norman much, I fear,—  
 For his designs are now, alas! too clear.  
 When last I saw him on our fated shore,  
 An aspect stern and thoughtful looks he wore:  
 Enquiries strange and many then he made,  
 And converse held with men of every grade.  
 We saw him smile, discourse in lordly tone,  
 Crowned as if the kingdom were his own.  
 His Norman fav'rites, in their rampant pride,  
 Sought by intrigue proud sway on every side.  
 Our father Godwin ne'er concealed his fears,  
 His words prophetic still are in my ears:  
 His mind sagacious knew him for a foe,  
 Whose fierce ambition augur'd future woe.  
 Alas! my brother, more than ever dear,  
 How dread thy perils to my mind appear!  
 And yet that vow, which naught may now repair,  
 Wert thou compelled, that fearful oath to swear?  
 And how could force, a man of warlike fame,  
 Impel to act of deep and lasting shame?  
 And can a sanction, sacred e'er be borne,  
 By act of treason, such as thou hast sworn?  
 My mighty brother, once so famed in war,  
 Erst England's hope, but now her fading star!

What cruel fate, what fiendlike force, design,  
 Constrained this deed, this oath accurs: of thine ?  
 And Ulf not here ! our brother fondly loved !  
 And from his home, so long, so far removed !  
 Will he return ? And when will dawn the hour  
 Of his release from William's hateful power ?  
 Must he remain a victim to despair,  
 And pass his days in sorrow, exile there ?  
 Much I deplore th' events thou dost relate ;  
 They seem portentous of great England's fate."

Gently, Prince Harold to the Queen replied,  
 And sought his anguish, by these words to hide :  
 " Sister beloved, let not these fears prevail ;  
 Regrets so bitter cannot now avail.  
 The day of danger must be still remote ;  
 To meet that hour, our safety to promote,  
 Each sure defence that foresight can prepare,  
 To shield the throne, our country to secure,  
 Will be my care, my duty to fulfil,  
 If so directed by my sovereign's will.  
 'Tis true I've sworn, but England still is free,  
 To foil invasion both on land and sea.  
 And yet so long as I a soldier live,  
 My life for England I will freely give.  
 If fate decree that I my life should yield,  
 To fierce invaders on some hard-fought field,  
 I'll fall surrounded by the free, the brave,  
 And find, perchance, a hero's death and grave,  
 Should I receive the monarch's high command,  
 To lead his armies and defend the land ;

Should the proud Norman ever claim his throne,  
 I'll seek my fault, my weakness to atone :  
 We from our shores, will the invader sweep,  
 And drive his legions to the wasting deep.  
 Ulf will return to find secure repose,  
 From William's wrongs ; an end to all his woes."

Short pause ensued ; and none the silence broke,  
 Until the King these words impressive spoke :  
 " 'Twere now in vain to dwell upon the past,  
 Or scenes retrace, by shadows dark o'ercast.  
 Should dire invasion menace our fair shores,  
 And bring its perils to our very doors :  
 Should foes escape the fleets around our coasts,  
 They'll meet in arms proud England's martial hosts.  
 But, noble Prince, events now loudly call,  
 For council grave and loyal aid of all.  
 Oft thou hast gained the nation's, my applause,  
 For high devotion to thy country's cause ;  
 And in this hour of danger to the throne,  
 To thee I look ; I count on thee alone.  
 Far in the north, where rude Northumbria lies,  
 A rebel force all rule and law defies :  
 Tostig, our brother, banished thence hath been,  
 And cruel outrage marks each troubled scene.  
 They of young Morcar have election made,  
 Earl of Northumbria, in our brother's stead.  
 The Royal power has there been overthrown,  
 And lawless subjects my just rule disown.  
 There dangers rise : Tostig demands our aid,  
 And he is lost, if succour be delayed.

With all my forces at thy great command,  
Soon must thy arms this fierce revolt withstand."

To whom thus Harold :—" Mine 'tis to obey,  
And in such cause, my fealty to display.  
The law, great King, my first devotion claims,  
And so of all, whom now your wisdom names  
To such high trust—great honour from your hand,  
First to repress revolt throughout the land.  
My brother next, my firm support will find,  
In this great duty, to my sword assigned."

Her grief assuaged by Harold's safe return,  
Still long and deeply did Queen Edith mourn,  
And with her brother, converse oft she held,  
Of all he did, ha l suffered and beheld,  
In that far land, where he so long had strayed,  
And where by William he had been betrayed.  
Oft on young Ulf her tender accents fell,  
And oft bewailed that exile borne so well.  
Much did she brood in fear, o'er time to come,  
In thought prophetic of mysterious doom ;  
Misgivings then and monitors too true,  
Of threatening perils, which around them grew.  
These grieved her soul, her mind with gloom oppress'd,  
Darkened her days and broke her midnight rest.  
The daughter she of Godwin the renowned,  
Whose glorious deeds on many a page are found.  
Long famed in peace and great in deeds of war,  
'Mong Saxons, Danes, on Norway's shores afar,  
'Mid scenes of glory that proud name appears,  
Tho' doubtful deeds hung o'er his later years.

The founder he of an illustrious race,  
 Whose mournful fate this humble page will trace.  
 And whence that Godwin, whose immortal name,  
 Shines fiercely bright in England's early fame ?  
 Here let me pause and with my verse entwine  
 The far traditions of his lofty line ;  
 'Twill form the prelude to that final doom,  
 Which swept his offspring to untimely tomb.  
 'Twas night once more on Sorsteine's field of blood,  
 'Mid scenes of woe two mighty monarchs stood.  
 Canute and Edmund, with their martial hosts,  
 During two days of carnage kept their posts.  
 Nor Dane, nor Saxon, could advantage gain,  
 While thousands there lay ghastly on the plain, }  
 And weltering squadrons slept among the slain. }  
 The second day had sunk 'mid golden light,  
 And with first shades of the descending night, }  
 Had ended then that world-renowned fight. }  
 The conflict o'er, the Danish legions fled,  
 And left to vultures, beasts of prey their dead.  
 With shattered hosts, at midnight's silent hour,  
 The foe escaped from Edmund's weakened power.  
 And warlike Canute from that field of death,  
 To London marched with still-increasing wrath.  
 One noble Dane, and Ulf the name he bore,  
 In a deep wood, ere that dark day was o'er,  
 In rapid flight pursued had lost his way ;  
 And wandered there till the decline of day.  
 The night came on, until the morning beam,  
 Ulf strays alone thro' dell and by the stream.

Slow breaks the dawn, the fields with dew are wet,  
 And in the skies some stars are shining yet ;  
 While far around the echoes of the morn,  
 By wakening winds are o'er the landscape borne.  
 The Danish chieftain, in a doubtful mood,  
 At that sweet hour by the dark forest stood.  
 With anxious look the region round he eyed,  
 At length a shepherd near the spot he spied :  
 In humble garb, but of commanding mien,  
 With grazing flocks the Saxon youth was seen.  
 Him Ulf accosts and courteous bearing shows,  
 And asks his name, if such he would disclose.  
 To him the shepherd ready answer made,  
 While his brief words a spirit prompt displayed :

" They call me Godwin,—such the name I bear,  
 I'm Wulfoth's son—my humble home is near :  
 But thou art one a Saxon well should know,  
 A Prince, or chieftain of Our Danish foe."

To him the Dane : " Brave, and ingenuous youth,  
 In what thou sayest thy words declare the truth.  
 Against thy country arms I long have borne,  
 And to thy race have war and conquest sworn.  
 High stood my name and great was the command  
 My sword maintained against the Saxon land.  
 Thus thee I trust— canst thou to me disclose  
 What distance hence the River Severn flows.  
 And where our fleet, safe from the raging winds,  
 Beneath its shores a present refuge finds ?  
 Lies there a way by which those ships to join,  
 Or must I here a wanderer still remain ? "



To whom young Godwin : " Can Danish chief believe,  
 That he from Saxon succour should receive ?  
 Dost thou not know that thy great king hath fled,  
 From battle field, where may a Dane lies dead ?  
 Tho' thou hast wandered thro' the dreary night,  
 Short is the distance measured in thy flight.  
 Across the forest, a few steps would bring,  
 Thee, mighty Prince, a captive to our king."

When thus the Dane : " Thy words, fair youth, are just,  
 Yet thou seem'st one whom kings might wisely trust.  
 There is a light upon thy stainless brow,  
 Such as proud destinies alone bestow.  
 Learn first, my boy, the secret of my name,  
 One thou hast heard, long heralded by fame.  
 Among thy people, and in many a scene,  
 The name of Ulf long since proclaimed hath been.  
 Next to King Canute, I the Danish power  
 Have proudly wielded to this fatal hour.  
 On yester eve, before the sun had set,  
 King Edmund we in final conflict met ;  
 With chosen band and sudden on his rear,  
 I with my Danes from ambush close appear,  
 The warlike monarch, with selected force,  
 Confronts my squadrons and arrests my course.  
 Fierce, sharp and wild the bloody combat rose,  
 But soon we fled, o'erwhelm'd by our foes.  
 I rode for life, till yonder wood I gained :  
 I leaped to earth—my war-horse there remained ;  
 I fled pursued—but found no refuge near,  
 Tho' lost my way in forest wild and drear.

And then to shield me from pursuing wrath,  
 Deep shades of night fell thick upon my path.  
 If, as thou sayest, the Danish King hath fled,  
 He was defeated and he deems me dead.  
 Since me to Canute closest alliance binds,  
 Within his heart a place my memory finds;  
 Great the reward that monarch would bestow  
 On him who would procure me safety now:  
 And thou art young, and in thy fearless eye,  
 There beams a spirit, which will bear thee high.  
 Thy fields renounce, my footsteps hence direct,  
 And then from me, high recompense expect.  
 Quick point the way, and lead where I may find  
 Great Canute's camp, and I myself will bind  
 To be thy friend through every future day,  
 When thy career shall glorious deeds display."

To him the Saxon: "That way, great Dane, is long:  
 To guide thee hence would be disloyal, wrong.  
 And great would prove the dangers on our path,  
 Pursued, nay hunted, by the peasants, wrath.  
 The people proud of victory now obtained,  
 Close watch for Dane is everywhere maintained;  
 No mercy would, or could they now extend,  
 Nor 'gainst their hate, could I thy life defend.  
 And yet 'twere hard, since thou dost thus confide,  
 Aid to refuse thee as a faithful guide."

Here the great Dane quick from his finger brought  
 A signet-ring in jewelled radiance wrought,  
 Which he to Godwin as a token gave,  
 Who eyed the Prince with aspect cold and grave

Then brief inspection of the diamond made,  
 It he restored, and coldly to him said :  
 " Not so, proud Dane ; great, mighty as thou art,  
 Think not by bribes to gain a Saxon's heart ;  
 For not from foe will I such mede receive,  
 But counsel take, if thee I can relieve  
 From present perils, which thy life surround,  
 And guide thee where thy sov'reign may be found.  
 Come to my father's house in yonder vale,  
 And tarry there, till shades of night prevail."

The Dane consented, Godwin led the way,  
 Along a path which by the forest lay :  
 The aged Wulnoth doubtful greeting gave,  
 To the great chief, whom Godwin sought to save.  
 But when the youth had all the truth revealed,  
 Nor from his father his design concealed,  
 He breathed those hopes, which in his bosom grew,  
 As to his mind the future rose to view ;  
 The sire reproved what the fair boy had done,  
 And thus to him in mild reproof begun :

" My thoughtless son, this heedless act of thine  
 Reproof deserves, destroys each hope of mine.  
 Ah ! how couldst thou give aid unto a Dane,  
 And thus awaken all my woes again.  
 This famous chief, thus wandering here and lost,  
 At thy request our threshold thus hath cross'd.  
 By holiest law, my honor now is bound,  
 To give protection to a foe so found.  
 Should I dismiss him on his way alone,  
 He'll surely perish, ere a day be gone :

If he remain, despite all close disguise,  
 To us, to him, great dangers may arise,  
 How of this Dane, can we henceforth dispose,  
 Nor of our friends make fierce and deadly foes?  
 What course pursue quick let thy words declare,  
 To rescue him—this evil to repair.”

“ Let me, my father, be this Chieftain’s guide,  
 Promptly young Godwin to his sire replied ;  
 And sure I am, thro’ influence of the Dane,  
 To great King Canute free access to gain :  
 Our fallen fortunes I will then retrieve,  
 And wrongs redress, your lot hath been to grieve.”

Then the great hopes, he for that child possesset,  
 All cold reserve, subdued within his breast.  
 Discourse he held and passing comment made,  
 On fell designs, by Canute long betrayed.  
 The Dane was pliant, candid with his host.  
 And he in turn was courteous to his guest.  
 The day he passed in Wulnoth’s humble home,  
 Prepared to leave, when evening hour should come.  
 Night came at length, then each with anxious heart,  
 The Dane with Godwin, hastened to depart.  
 Then aged Wulnoth to the chieftain said,  
 While on his arm a friendly hand he laid :

“ Know that to thee my son I thus confide,  
 Thy steps thro’ dangers dark, unknown to guide.  
 Trust to the boy, a prompt, sagacious mind,  
 And dauntless heart, in peril thou wouldst find.  
 Henceforth for him, no safety will remain,  
 Should he return unto his home again.

By the rude hands of his own friends he'd die,  
 If it were known, he aided Dane to fly.  
 Near thy great King, let him have access free,  
 And may he find a faithful friend in thee.  
 Tho' to my heart this noble child be dear,  
 I know his fitness for a great career ;  
 In public councils or on fields of fame,  
 He yet may win a high and glorious name."

Ulf pledged his faith, and passed his word for more,  
 And great the fruits, that word of promise bore.  
 To Godwin then the anxious father turned,  
 Said brief adieu and thus the stripling warned :  
 " Godwin, my child, my latest hope, my pride,  
 May Heaven bless thee and thy footsteps guide.  
 Tho' dangers wait and snares thy path surround,  
 Let honor, courage in each act be found.  
 Be true, be loyal, sacred be thy word ;  
 Firm be thy faith, and bright as hero's sword.  
 The noble trust this Dane hath placed in thee,  
 In all fulfil, and honored thou shalt be.  
 Now both adieu ! God speed you on your way,  
 And shield my Godwin thro' each future day."

The father then his weeping son embraced,  
 Whose footsteps thence were ne'er to be retraced.  
 Quick they went forth, and many a peril past,  
 They both in safety reached the camp at last.  
 Canute near London lay with all his force,  
 And there encamped, had paused upon his course.  
 When Ulf the Dane, safe at the camp arrived,  
 By Godwin's aid, and foeman's wrath survived,

He on a seat, the highest by his side,  
Caused to sit down his youthful Saxon guide.  
As his own son he place of honor gave,  
To one so true, sagacious, and so brave.  
This chieftain long in foremost grandeur shone,  
And had his place near Canute's mighty throne :  
And when the monarch greeted his return,  
He eager sought his kinsman's tale to learn.  
Then Ulf, the Dane, did joyfully relate,  
What might have been and what had been his fate.  
That to young Godwin, and to him alone,  
And the devotion which the boy had shown,  
His life he owed. Then asked the Danish King,  
That to his sovereign he the youth might bring.  
Canute commanded that the guide be brought,  
And quickly Ulf the Saxon shepherd sought :  
And when he came, no youth had Canute seen,  
Of nobler aspect, or of brighter mien.  
He was addressed in many a gracious word,  
And in Ulf's wish, the Danish Prince concurred.  
To posts of honor, Godwin soon attained.  
And in each trust a steadfast course maintained.  
Years passed away ; the Saxon peasant won  
The brightest fame for deeds of glory done.  
Chief of vast power, of high and warlike fame,  
Of regions wide the ruler he became.  
Well skilled in war, but more in arts of peace,  
He ever sought his power to increase.  
Him Canute trusted in a great career,  
And of his realm made him a mighty peer.

Godwin became in days of his renown,  
 The chief support of Canute's glorious crown.  
 That monarch's sister Thyra first he wed ;  
 But soon that Princess slumbered with the dead.  
 In after times deep censures were aroused,  
 For canute's niece, young Githa he espoused.  
 And from this union, sons and daughters sprung,  
 The noblest, fairest of the land among :—  
 Offspring renowned, once Eng-land's hope and boast,  
 A mighty race, with Saxon empire lost.  
 The eldest Sweyn, and long his father's pride,  
 Had all restraint and every law defied.  
 Flagitious life, opprobrium of his time,  
 And later known for many a fearful crime.  
 Foul rape and murder sullied his fair name,  
 And left dark records of his guilt and shame.  
 A wanderer he, an outlaw oft reprieved,  
 In foreign lands an outcast he had lived.  
 His honor lost, a pilgrim he had gone  
 To the far East, and there had died alone.  
 The youthful Haco was his son ; but he,  
 Unlike his sire, was from dark vices free.  
 Came Harold next, the mightiest of his race,  
 Whose bright career, such great events embrace.  
 Ill-fated Prince ! the Saxon's proudest hope,  
 A hero formed with England's foes to cope.  
 He fighting sunk beneath a conqueror's power,  
 With glory brightening o'er his dying hour.  
 Him Tostig followed : one of strange compound ;  
 And scarce could soul, more rude or fierce be found.

Proud, revengeful, turbulent he grew,  
 And on his country, dire disasters drew.  
 For noted beauty, and for courtly grace,  
 He far surpassed most men of Saxon race.  
 Fair Edith next—King Edward's peerless Queen,  
 Whose worth and beauty, long renowned had been.  
 Then followed Gurth, a man of purest fame,  
 A valiant prince who left a deathless name.  
 A nobler heart, and one from guile more free,  
 In breast ne'er beat, nor greater soul could be.  
 Next Leofwin, the beautiful the brave :—  
 They early died ; for both had hoped to save,  
 Great Harold's crown in battle's fierce array,  
 And fighting fell on Hastings' fatal day.  
 Then he—whom Harold, in an evil hour,  
 Had sought to rescue from the Norman's power.  
 This fate denied, and Ulf a victim fell,  
 To cruel bondage claimed, enforced too well.  
 And last Elberga, lovely as a beam,  
 By Hesperus shed upon a lover's dream.  
 In youth she died—in the bright, opening morn  
 Of life's sweet day, by sorrow still unworn.  
 Godwin in time, tho' friendly to the Dane,  
 Did o'er the Saxons, lasting influence gain.  
 When Canute died, by conduct wise and bold,  
 Upon their thrones his sons he did uphold.  
 When these were gone whom he so often blamed,  
 True to his race, King Edward he proclaimed.  
 And in the end, both Danes and Normans learned  
 How proud the spirit which within him burned.



When they had sought to bring the Saxon low,  
 To both he proved a stern, relentless foe.  
 Long he was charged, thro' dark and stormy times,  
 With fierce ambition and appalling crimes :  
 And wrathful men o'er his fair fame have strewed  
 Wild tales of treason, treachery and blood :  
 But he still triumphed thro' each evil day,  
 And brightly shone upon his meteor way.  
 He died in glory, great and full of years :  
 So in the past his famous name appears.

King Edward's orders to the Prince conveyed,  
 Were promptly all and loyally obeyed.  
 Brief time waits Harold ; at an early day,  
 With veteran troops, he hastens on his way.  
 Still couriers came with startling news to tell,  
 Of all that Tostig and his Thanes befel.  
 On Harold marched, with all his patriot force,  
 To crush foul treason in its lawless course.  
 He to Northampton straight his army led,  
 Where Danish rebels from the North had sped.  
 Two famous Earls, Edwin and Morecar, both,  
 With hurried march, advanced upon the south.  
 So soon as both those armies came in view,  
 The northern Chieftains sought an interview.  
 This being granted, they at once declared  
 Each grievance past ; for what they stood prepared.  
 Harold in arms, surrounded by his guards,  
 The chiefs received, and spoke reproving words :  
 " What means this tumult ? what this bold revolt  
 Against your king ? Is he forsooth in fault ?

Are these the acts by which you would repay  
 A partial monarch's mild, indulgent sway?  
 Does Tostig too, your ruler and your prince,  
 Such wrongful sway, such tyranny evince,  
 That he is banished, with an outlaw's name,  
 And in his place, another you proclaim?  
 Why do foul murders meet with loud applause?  
 Are you in arms to vindicate the laws?  
 Sent by your sovereign I must now enquire,  
 Why you rebel, and what your chiefs require.  
 Your wrongs make known, explain these deeds of blood,  
 And why your Prince in arms you have withstood."

Earl Oswald here, a great and valiant Dane,  
 And of Northumbria a renowned Thane,  
 Who 'gainst Earl Tostig had the standard raised  
 Of fierce revolt, and had his castle seized,  
 With Harold's order, grave and stern, complied,  
 And to the Prince in accents firm replied:

"Illustrious Prince, you bid us here declare,  
 Of this revolt what the chief motives are:  
 Ere I proceed these motives to explain,  
 Brief words now hear, nor let me speak in vain.  
 Whate'er incentives in our acts prevail,  
 This wide revolt, we each, we all bewail.  
 Tho' thro' the land, disorder, blood is rife,  
 And late events portend approaching strife;  
 Yet not a voice against the King is raised;  
 But wide and far his rule is freely praised.  
 A nobler monarch never filled a throne,  
 To guard his life we'd sacrifice our own.

We proffer you renewed allegiance here,  
And this to him, we pray you hence to bear.  
From him we hoped and marched to seek redress :  
For not in vain, but ever with success,  
Appeals to him for justice have been made ;  
Your presence here hath still his care displayed.  
Whate'er our faults, this crime we now disown,  
And boast our fealty to our sovereign's crown.  
When Siward died, this great Northumbrian land  
Was all transferred to Tostig's high command.  
To this selection, by our monarch's will,  
The northern Thanes show'd their submission still.  
But this Earl Tostig hath a tyrant grown,  
And for his crimes, hath thus been overthrown.  
Such wild misrule he has of late displayed ;  
So much he sought our honor to degrade,  
That all forbearance on our part hath ceased,  
And from his rule we pray to be released.  
Rapacious taxes without law imposed,  
By force are levied and by him disposed.  
He on our country hath disasters brought,  
And crime incites, both here and at the court.  
Blood dripping murder and foul deeds proclaim,  
Our cruel wrongs, and his eternal shame.  
Our boast is freedom, well our rights we know,  
And to his rule we ne'er our heads will bow.  
This tyrant's way we are resolved to brave,  
And from your hands another ruler crave.  
This end attained, our arms we lay aside,  
And by your choice, we're willing to abide.

Mean time Earl Morcar by election stands,  
 Our rightful chief; to him give your commands."

To him thus Harold—" Much your acts I blame,  
 And more that they are sanctioned by thy name.  
 If as you say much cruelties abound,  
 For Tostig's crimes could no redress be found,  
 But foul faced treason, overthrowing law,  
 Which your allegiance from the throne withdraw,  
 Spreading dismay, and rapine thro' the land,  
 With hideous murder, fruits of your command?  
 Yet if these wrongs be proved as partly true,  
 And hence in arms rebellion you pursue,  
 At once withdraw, and to your homes return,  
 Till by enquiry all the truth I learn.  
 Let order reign while I secure you peace,  
 Let every outrage and disorder cease,  
 Till I a full investigation make,  
 And thereupon, our sovereign's orders take.  
 My duty first is Tostig now to see,  
 And learn from him what his defence may be:  
 After some days an answer I will give,  
 Till then may you in peace and safety live."

With all their force, the northern Earls retired,  
 Tho' doubtful hopes Prince Harold had inspired.  
 To Lincoln then the rebels thence withdrew,  
 Nor arm'd revolt sought henceforth to renew.  
 From Harold straight a messenger was sent,  
 By whom his orders to Earl Tostig went.  
 The Prince at Oxford this sure missive found,  
 Where he by orders to remain was bound.

And now required to come without delay,  
 And meet Prince Harold at the earliest day.  
 Tostig obeyed and soon his brother joined,  
 Who, tho' dismayed, to aid him was inclined :  
 Their greetings o'er, the brothers then alone,  
 Discourse began with kind familiar tone.  
 And first his brother, Harold thus addressed,  
 While deep emotion rose within his breast :

“ This interview, my brother, I have sought,  
 Grieved by rebellion which great strife has brought  
 On that proud land, long subject to thy sway,  
 Now torn and bleeding on this wrathful day.  
 Here we are brothers, thou thy wrongs declare,  
 And all relate, while I each thought may share.  
 These rebels have some fair excuses shown,  
 And they, meantime, have from this place withdrawn.  
 Now lend thy ear to the great wrongs they plead,  
 Caused, as they say, by many a cruel deed.  
 The warlike leaders of this great revolt  
 The cause to thee ascribe, say thine's the fault.  
 'Tis urged that taxes, without law enforced,  
 Of all these grievances, are not the worst ;  
 That blood of Thanes and chieftains of renown,  
 The seeds of vengeance thro' the land have sown ;  
 And that, in truth, thou sternly hast of late,  
 With tyrant hand ruled the Northumbrian state.  
 This is not true ! are fierce complaints like these  
 Well or ill founded ? that I may appease  
 This insurrection, ere it grow too high,  
 The truth declare—on me thou mayest rely.”

Then Tostig thus—"Harold, in vain, I fear,  
 Thou hast enjoined this friendly meeting here.  
 Came I for this? that for these rebels' sake,  
 I hear reproaches which these traitors make?  
 Vague accusations, such as these to cast  
 Upon my rule, and my fair name to blast?  
 Could'st thou hold parley with my bitter foes,  
 With the vile miscreants, who have caused such woes?  
 With men in arms against your sovereign's crown,  
 And who all rule, all order now disown?  
 Art thou a Prince, assertor of the law,  
 And hence permit those rebels to withdraw?  
 Hath good King Edward named thee to this post,  
 Escape to favor of rebellious host?  
 To waste, destroy, fresh forces still to gain,  
 And thus revolt against me to maintain?  
 Is this thy mission? this the way to quell  
 The crimes of men who without cause rebel?  
 Alas! I fear, nay, plainly now I see,  
 Thou art my foe, at least, no friend to me!  
 This northern Earldom, I must needs infer,  
 Thou seekest now on others to confer.  
 That as it may, tho' I am thus betrayed,  
 The day of vengeance cannot be delayed.  
 Make every charge, in dark insidious form:  
 For all prepared, I'll boldly meet the storm.  
 Thou talkest of murders; all I will explain,  
 When thou hast shown whom I've unjustly slain.  
 And so with taxes I am now reproached,  
 Tho' on their rights, I ne'er have once encroached.

I ruled my Earldom with and by known laws,  
 And all the good bestow on me applause.  
 Why should'st thou thus against thy brother hear  
 What treacherous Oswald falsely makes appear?  
 His words believe, tho' he's alone to blame,  
 And treason stamps him with eternal shame!  
 Well Morcar plots Northumbria to obtain,  
 This prize he seeks, nor seeks perchance in vain.  
 His highest hope, is to subvert our race,  
 And this great aim in all his acts I trace.  
 Didst thou but act a brother's friendly part,  
 Thou would'st defeat this object of his heart;  
 Repress revolt, and my just rule restore,  
 And leave my power greater than before."

To him thus Harold: "I have not come here,  
 With thy dominion, rights, to interfere.  
 My object is, peace, order to restore:  
 And to that end, the King's commands I bear.  
 No change I seek—no man I now accuse,  
 Both sides I hear—the King his course will choose.  
 But thy harsh words, with insolence combined,  
 Proclaim a reckless and defiant mind.  
 Thy senseless fury will not here avail,  
 Nor shall thy fierceness o'er the law prevail,  
 Nor e'er restore thy now subverted power,  
 Nor aid thy cause in peril's coming hour.  
 In foul abuse, in violence of speech,  
 Thy rabid tongue doth all my acts impeach:  
 But no defence, no good excuse can find,  
 To arm the crown, thy conduct to defend.

Murder's a jest ; and yet methinks we knew,  
 Gemmil and Ulf, and great Cospatrick, too ;  
 And many more whom I to thee might name,  
 Whose deaths mysterious, men are wont to blame.  
 T'is said in others thou hast had thy part ;  
 If this be false, thy innocence assert.  
 If naught thou hast but ribaldry and hate :  
 I then, proud brother, leave thee to thy fate."

Tos' g, incensed, to Harold thus replied :  
 " Indulge thy wrath, my fate I will abide.  
 If here I fail, elsewhere I'll seek redress ;  
 Then on thy life my deep revenge will press.  
 My rights I claim, no more than is my due,  
 But not to thee or Edward will I sue.  
 An hour will come, will mark some future day,  
 When retribution will my wrongs repay.  
 One choice be thine and either I bestow,  
 Make me thy friend, or send me hence thy foe."

To whom Prince Harold frowning, answer made,  
 Tho' calm the tone in which his words were said :  
 " Well have I known the temper of thy soul,  
 So fierce, untamed, bereft of all control,  
 Language like this—vindictive and so bold,  
 Proves thy dark passions, ever uncontrolled.  
 Thy words I've heard, and am with horror seized,  
 At such wild ravings of a mind diseased.  
 Sad proof lies there—no further I require,  
 Nor faith, nor hope thy conduct can inspire.  
 Expect the worst, and all thy soul prepare,  
 An exile's doom thro' future years to share.



Thy friendship, hate, are equal in my eyes,  
 Thine idle threats of vengeance I despise.  
 Reflect, submit, and claim thy sov'reign's grace;  
 For his forgiveness there may yet be place:  
 If not, begone—commit thee to thy fate,  
 And stern decree from Edward now await.  
 A brother's warning from a brother take,  
 If not for thee, still for our mother's sake.  
 Of Heaven and man, the sure avenging wrath  
 Will haunt pursue thee on thy lonely path."

Uprose those brothers, in that wrathful mood,  
 And from that day estranged forever stood.  
 Grand in their beauty towered those mighty men,  
 Whose minds incensed could find no utterance then.  
 Yet scarce could Tostig his wild rage restrain,  
 And on his brother frowned with fierce disdain.  
 While noble Harold, with supreme control,  
 Sought to command the passions of his soul.  
 And then no more those haughty brothers spoke;  
 No last adieu that awful silence broke.  
 Forthwith the younger did that place depart,  
 With mien composed, but with resentful heart.  
 On earth alas! save on a bloody plain,  
 These warlike chieftains never met again.  
 At Stamford Bridge upon a fatal day,  
 They led the van of battle's dread array.  
 On Harold's mind now fell dark shades of care,  
 Forboding woes from Tostig's stern despair.  
 The sorrowing Prince directs each anxious thought  
 The truth to learn; he by enquiry sought

The damning proof of Tostig's cruel course,  
Which in the Tyrant wakened no remorse.

This task performed, to London he returned,  
And gave report of all that he had learned.  
Whate'er regrets Prince Harold then might feel,  
In acting thus, he seeks the public weal.  
Yet more ; stern justice he himself demands,  
E'en on a brother from the monarch's hands.  
In this King Edward fully now agreed,  
Tho' with reluctance, right he did concede.  
The order ran, that the election made  
Of young Earl Morcar should not be gainsay'd :  
That free thence forth beneath his great command,  
Should rest secure that far Northumbrian land.  
Tho' hard his doom, none other there could be,  
And forth from Edward went the stern decree.

This being done and the revolt suppress'd,  
Deep fury glowed in Tostig's savage brest.  
He wild resentment in his words displayed,  
And his departure not one day delayed.  
But ere he went, his anger to denote,  
These words of menace, he to Harold wrote :  
" By royal decree too well I am informed,  
Thy part thou hast with cruel haste performed ;  
And bitter fruits I promise thou shalt reap,  
And of these acts, a fearful memory keep.  
Thy wrongful deeds, injustice done to me,  
In the dark future well repaid shall be ;  
Ambition now, but then my curse shall speak,  
And in those days avenging woes will wreak

On one so lost to honor and to shame  
 Who blights his own, likewise a brother's fame.  
 'Tis not weak Edward, who this deed hath done ;  
 But thee I blame, and thee in truth alone.  
 Thy fondest hopes still aim at sov'reign power :  
 And only wait the last, the fatal hour,  
 Of Edward's death ; he numbered with the dead,  
 Thou'lt seek to fill his vacant throne instead.  
 Now learn thy fate —my word with thee I'll keep,  
 My sure revenge by day nor night shall sleep.  
 Fierce foes I'll raise and lead them to this shore,  
 Pursue thy life, thy fortunes evermore.  
 When strict compliance William shall compel,  
 With thy strange oath, with that foul pledge to sell,  
 Thyself, thy country, and the Saxon throne,  
 A triple traitor whom all men disown,  
 I'll aid him well in that long work of blood,  
 And on thy path will pour a fiery flood  
 Of strife and woe which will thy life beset,  
 And leave thee victim to my vengeance yet."

This cruel missive to the Prince address'd,  
 The deepest pangs aroused in Harold's breast.  
 This dark allusion to the dreadful oath,  
 Seemed now prophetic of some future wrath.  
 Tostig's devotion to the Norman power  
 Might yield assistance in some fatal hour.  
 He learned too soon, and yet alas ! too late,  
 How fierce, relentless is a brother's hate.  
 At Bruges then Earl Baldwin held his court,  
 And thither Tostig did in haste resort :

And Judith, too, his proud and beauteous wife,  
 And ever still the light or his dark life,  
 From England's shores to Baldwin's halls they went,  
 Both on revenge and new disasters bent.

King Edward's soul, in later years forlorn,  
 These last events, with suffering keen had borne.  
 By grief, by illness, gravely then oppress'd,  
 His pious mind lon'g'd wearily for rest.  
 Life's feeble light was burning dim and low,  
 And he sunk calmly thro' each hour of woe.  
 The Queen nor Harold could their fears deceive,  
 And with the monarch, oft did Edith grieve.  
 Oftimes their speech predicted coming woe,  
 And future conflicts with the Norman foe.  
 Thus Edward's days were drawing to a close,  
 And o'er him slow was gathering death's repose.  
 And calmer grew the sacred monarch's mind,  
 As he waxed feebler,—thro' each hour declined.

'Twas midnight, and around the monarch's bed,  
 Aldred, Stigand, and great Duke Harold stood.  
 In halls hard by were nobles of renown,  
 The firm supporters of the English crown;  
 And the fair Edith, in that hour of woe,  
 With tearful eye, looks on his faded brow.  
 The dying Prince then raised his sinking voice,  
 And spoke to Aldred, ere his final choice,  
 Of a successor to the English crown,  
 Of one whose sway the proudest land might own:  
 "Aldred my guide, my life fades as a dream,  
 I ask thy counsel at this hour supreme.

Thou knowest young Edgar's claim to fill the throne  
 And all my wishes well to thee are known.  
 Thou knowest too that he can never wield  
 That sceptred trust, or sword in battle-field.  
 Can the great oath which Harold rashly made,  
 To crown the Norman, when in dust I'm laid,  
 Be disregarded, or be here forgiven,  
 Or do such vows find record too in Heaven?  
 To whom Aldred—"Let no dark fears prevail,  
 An oath so sworn, cannot the Duke avail.  
 Our Head Supreme would absolution give  
 From oath so taken, should you not survive."  
 To Stigand now, the monarch with a sigh,  
 Made feeble sign, for death was drawing nigh;  
 "Stigand, my friend, my strength in evil days,  
 Dost thou concur, in what our Aldred says?"  
 Stigand thus prompt—"August and honored lord,  
 Of what he says, believe each sacred word.  
 Touching this oath I my assurance bring,  
 It binds no man, much less a chosen King."  
 The monarch then, Prince Harold thus addressed  
 While gently he that chieftain's hand impressed:  
 "Harold, 'tis done; despite all prior claim,  
 To the great trust thou art the one I name.  
 Love thy people—all these friends of mine  
 Will favor thee—will freely join with thine.  
 God bless thy efforts, and reward thy worth,  
 When I shall sleep beneath the cold, dull earth.  
 Harold farewell! may God's protecting power,  
 Guide and guard thee in the perilous hour."

Then to the Queen he silent token made,  
 And all withdrew, while that adieu was said :  
 "Sweet Edith, my beloved, the hour has come,  
 A voice now calls me to a distant home.  
 Let vanished years, those days thy love hath blest,  
 Dwell in thy memory when I've sunk to rest.  
 I'm wearied, my beloved, with many a woe,  
 And gladly hence to other worlds I go.  
 Among the dead, the mourned, I soon shall be,  
 When I am gone, weep not, my love, for me.  
 Harold, thy brother, with his warlike arm,  
 Will shield thy life from peril and from harm."

But sudden then across the monarch's brow,  
 The palor of the grave came cold and ghastly now.  
 The Queen knelt there in agony of soul,  
 No hopes of earth her grief could now console.  
 With whispering accents and in broken speech,  
 These last sad words his weeping consort reach :  
 "Edith farewell! Oh! guard her and thy throne,  
 Yes,—William, dark deed, Harold, God alone."

Thus spoke the King, and breathed his latest sigh  
 And with these memories closed his fading eye.  
 With pressure cold, he held Queen Edith's hand,  
 Till his pure spirit passed to brighter land.

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## BOOK SIXTH.

The remains of Edward the Confessor are interred with solemnity, but without pomp, in Westminster Abbey—Harold, the last of the Saxons, is proclaimed King of England, after an animated debate in a Council held at London—Several Speeches given—The Crowning of Harold described—His Address to the Council—The early acquiescence of all Southern England in his elevation to the throne—He is alarmed by the hesitation of the Northumbrians and others of the North—Harold hastens thither, accompanied by Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester—The influence of that Prelate, combined with Harold's conciliatory course, gains the Northumbrians—Adhesion and confidence of the Northern inhabitants of the kingdom—Harold's visit to Morecar, Earl of Northumberland—His betrothment to Editha, daughter of the great Earl Alfgar, and sister of Morecar and Edwin, Earl of Mercia.

The following morn quick spread the tidings round,  
And far and wide, diffused a grief profound.  
Soon at the Palace many nobles meet,  
And, silent there, each other briefly greet.  
Though these last rites no solemn pomp displayed,  
With pious care were preparations made.  
In a high car, enshrouded and inclosed,  
On royal bier, those cold remains reposed.  
Caparisoned in black, six sable steeds  
Await, and bear them where the cortege leads.  
They all advance, and Edgar follows there ;  
And with him Harold, deeper grief to share.  
Aldred and Stigand the procession lead,  
With holy men, in honor of the dead.

Of man's redemption, seen by every eye,  
The sacred sign, in front is borne on high.  
A mourning crowd extends the lengthening train,  
And few are there who tears and sighs restrain.  
Thus the vast throng, in long procession moved,  
And thousands wept the monarch they had loved.  
Upon that day, a nation's tears were shed,  
While deep-tongued bells pealed requiems for the dead.  
They reached the Abbey, still Westminster named,  
For mightier dead in after ages famed.  
Then holy Prelates, in their robes arrayed,  
The foremost met, and their advance was stayed.  
There many came, and round the sacred fane,  
Conspicuous thronged the Saxon and the Dane.  
They entered then that temple of man's fame,  
Within whose walls lives many a glorious name.  
Along the solemn aisle the corse is borne,  
While round that bier great England's Princes mourn.  
On elevation near the Altar made,  
The relics of this pious king were laid ;  
The last, cold, narrow bed of so much worth,  
Ere gathered thence unto their mother earth.  
Then o'er the dead, amid the awful gloom,  
Was said and sung the ritual of the tomb.  
Anthems and prayers ascended to the sky,  
With sacred hopes, the last that cannot die.  
Sad o'er that scene of sorrow and repose,  
The organ's strain thro' cloistered aisles arose :  
And from that spot, his final resting-place,  
Rose supplications to the throne of grace.



To the dull tomb thus promptly was consigned  
 A blameless king, who left few foes behind :—  
 The great Confessor that cold grave still keeps,  
 And there the pious, famed St. Edward sleeps.

Long he had reigned, had ruled with gentle hand,  
 And just his sway o'er this distracted land ;  
 His laws, thro' ages, men's applause have gained,  
 And in those times stern justice had maintained :  
 But the long glories of that mighty race  
 Were passing now, scarce there to leave a trace  
 Of what it had been ; and its day hung low  
 O'er mournful centuries of strife and woe.  
 Soon twilight came, with cold and gloomy light,  
 Then followed horrors of the dismal night.  
 Fierce, angry clouds, far in the distant skies,  
 O'er the horizon slowly now arise :  
 Ominous signs of fatal times to come,  
 The consummation of a nation's doom.

Now Edgar Atheling, last of Cerdic's race,  
 Was rightful heir to fill this monarch's place :  
 Tho' young, revered, the last of Cerdic's line,  
 He more by birth than by his deeds would shine.  
 Yet some were there who loudly urged his claim,  
 And him as king, forthwith they would proclaim :  
 But by renown, Duke Harold stood alone,  
 A fit successor to the English throne.  
 In peace sagacious, great in deeds of war ;  
 In fame and valor, England's brightest star.  
 A few for William, Normandy's great Prince,  
 Decided preference did, at first, evince.

But those were they, who to great England's cause  
 Preferred self-interest and the Duke's applause ;  
 Who knew the prizes William would bestow  
 On those who urged his high pretensions now.  
 And some there were who future dangers feared  
 For that loved land, so long to them endeared ;  
 To whom invasion and its ills were known ;  
 For aged hearts distrustful now had grown.  
 To end all doubt, a hasty council met,  
 Long ere the sun of that sad day had set.  
 That day on which King Edward was interred,  
 That high debate among the chiefs was heard.  
 Great Thanes and Earls, and other chiefs came there,  
 In that decree, then publicly to share :  
 And holy prelates, deep and grave in thought,  
 That hurried council of the kingdom sought.  
 In that assembly, promptly thus convened,  
 Uprose a Thane, whose choice to Harold leaned.  
 Oswald his name, a chief of Wessex he,  
 Who long had ruled o'er Saxons proud and free.  
 With cautious words, he first the silence broke,  
 And thus his peers, in modest utterance spoke :  
 " Princes and noble Thanes assembled here  
 A king to choose, to you it must appear  
 Our choice should fall upon a man mature,  
 Of whose great virtues we should all be sure.  
 Dangers surround us, perils great indeed,  
 And of strong arm the nation stands in need.  
 Among us still some grave dissensions reign,  
 And these to heal, we must not seek in vain.

The Norman threatens, nations more remote  
To our destruction, all their schemes devote.  
A Saxon King our ruler now should be,  
Valiant in war, renowned upon the sea.  
One of high lineage, whose supreme command  
Would sway the chieftains, levies of our land.  
Two royal claimants, you are well aware,  
With Harold vie, lost Edward's Crown to share,  
But should we Edgar, or Duke William take  
To rule the land,—if either king we make,  
The schemes of foreign and domestic foes,  
Would bring on England, now, unheard-of woes.  
But long hath Harold in high honor stood,  
Uniting claims of Danish, Saxon blood.  
Great are his deeds, and pure his mighty name,  
Long tried in arms, and of illustrious fame.  
For England's safety and the public good,  
Our fiercest foes he bravely hath withstood.  
With him I have through scenes of carnage fought,  
Firm in our trust, and one in deed and thought.  
We've known him there to act a hero's part,  
To prove a prince's and a patriot's heart.  
These words may plead the wish that friendship shares,  
But brighter hopes conviction now declares.  
None present here, his fitness will gainsay;  
None present here, can cold distrust betray;  
Nor foreign or domestic foe will dare  
To claim the crown, 'tis Harold's lot to wear.  
At his last hour, King Edward had declared  
That long his confidence that Prince had shared.

His latest hopes, low breathed in Stigand's ear,  
 Were that his crown this valiant chief should bear.  
 In that selection I for one concur,  
 And would on him the sceptre now confer."

Long, loud applause at this discourse was raised ;  
 They much the speaker, much great Harold, praised.  
 This done, Earl Hugo, Thane of Mercia, rose,  
 And in brief words, Prince Edgar did propose.

" Princes, Thanes, before your great decree  
 Go forth a law, where men will disagree,  
 It may be wise, a moment to recall  
 Each anxious thought, the hopes which sway us all,  
 That deep forethought may rule each patriot breast,  
 And no reproach upon our actions rest.  
 Prince Edgar now, the last of Cerdic's line,  
 Clear lineal rights does in his claim combine.  
 Called to the throne by his unquestioned right,  
 He'd stronger prove than Harold in his might,  
 And safer far, whate'er his friends may boast,  
 Than warlike William and his Norman host.  
 Prince Harold's foes, too numerous now have grown ;  
 No peace we'd know till he be overthrown.  
 Tostig and William would deny his right,  
 And 'gainst our country hostile force unite ;  
 Spread fierce dissensions, and ill-omened fear,  
 And sweep the island in their dread career.  
 Long wars they'd wage against this glorious state,  
 To wreak on Harold their undying hate.  
 They'd gather Danish and Norwegian hosts,  
 And pour destruction on our fertile coasts.

If the proud Norman were proclaimed our King,  
 He on the Saxons would wide ruin bring ;  
 Usurp our lands, and every means employ  
 To crush our freedom and our hopes destroy.  
 Therefore Prince Edgar still our choice should be ;  
 Thro' him alone we would be safe and free."

Some here approved, yet more no sign betrayed ;  
 For on but few, these words impression made.  
 Silence profound reigned in that conclave high,  
 When one arose, attracting every eye ;  
 An aged man, of calm and stately mien,  
 Who 'mong them long an oracle had been,  
 And thus he spoke :

" My countrymen and friends,  
 Now hear my words ; experience, wisdom lends  
 To age decrepid ; feeble tho' my frame,  
 To you, in truth, is not unknown my name.  
 Harold I know, his valiant deeds commend,  
 I watched his boyhood, and am still his friend.  
 I knew his father, much his friendship prized ;  
 Tho' tried too oft, its truth was ne'er disguised.  
 We were opposed, we strove in fields of blood,  
 But Godwin's love, his trust, each storm withstood.  
 Mine hath not changed, tho' many a year hath fled,  
 Since that proud name was numbered with the dead.  
 To his great son my wishes all incline,  
 For that Prince bright virtues too combine.  
 But sterner duty must with me prevail,  
 Nor friendship past nor present should avail.  
 Harold's strange oath, to the great Norman made,  
 Distracts my mind, much weakness hath betrayed.

Upon his acts 'twill powerful influence shed,  
 And to disasters great and signal lead.  
 If him we make our ruler and our king,  
 Perils unknown he will on England bring.  
 Divisions reign and jealousies will rise,  
 And other dangers, seen by aged eyes.  
 The youthful Edgar claims our high esteem,  
 But feeble he, and not the man, I deem,  
 O'er this great land to hold a sovereign sway,  
 Or ride the tempest thro' a darker day.  
 Scarce could that prince your mighty sceptre wield,  
 Nor from your foes could he the kingdom shield.  
 Duke William, then, remains our only choice,  
 And for that prince I freely give my voice.  
 In peace sagacious, and renowned his name,  
 His power vast, and high his martial fame,  
 If him you choose, and call him to the throne,  
 He'll rule the kingdom as he sways his own.  
 With a firm hand, the nation he'd unite,  
 Enforce strict law, and still uphold the right.  
 Here would he reign, here would his empire be,  
 And his own state be left beyond the sea.  
 Reject his claim, pursue a hostile course,  
 Then will he seek, by conquest, to enforce  
 Whatever claims ambition may assert,  
 And by his arms the kingdom may subvert.  
 "In times long gone, my lot was to behold  
 Dark scenes of woe, by history yet untold.  
 I saw the slaughter of the Danish race,  
 My memory still its horrors doth retrace,  
 And these no change, no time can e'er efface."

Dread Sweyn I saw upon his conquering path  
 While Saxon blood was object of his wrath.  
 The vast revenge which fired his cruel heart,  
 To his ambition did its rage impart.  
 I saw weak Ethelred before him fly,  
 And refuge seek in distant Normandy.  
 Our homes he left to the invading bands,  
 And for his safety fled to foreign lands.  
 I joined the shout which rose o'er regions wide,  
 When this dread Northman, in his pomp and pride,  
 Was, unrepentant, sudden made to feel  
 The deadly point of the avenging steel.  
 And I was there, when Canute, with his hosts,  
 Landed in wrath upon our fertile coasts.  
 I saw the fight on Sorsteine's bloody field,  
 Where Dane to Saxon was compelled to yield.  
 Brentford I saw, and Oxford's dreadful day,  
 And bloody Ashdown's proud and dark array.  
 I had two brothers, and I loved them well;  
 Far in the van upon that night they fell.  
 I've seen th' invader ravaging our soil,  
 And many a home their ruthless arms despoil.  
 Those warlike men, who in resisting bled,  
 Are cold and low, long slumbering with the dead.  
 Their fame and valor, long the poet's theme,  
 In memory live, and still immortal seem.  
 Those beacon lights upon the shores of time,  
 I have seen and saw, in all their glorious prime.  
 In manhood then, they for their country died,  
 And left the nation without hope or guide.

Where shall we see, or hope to see again,  
 Such mighty warriors England's arms sustain?  
 That race renowned has gone, hath passed away,  
 And left our empire to the stranger's sway.  
 They failed, alas! our limits to defend;  
 Can we on men degenerate now depend?  
 Oh, save the kingdom from that worst of woes,  
 To fall the victim of invading foes.  
 I'll say, Oh, save her! with my latest word,  
 From the fierce Norman's still destroying sword!  
 From her avert the wrath of coming years,  
 From desolation, mingling blood and tears!  
 Make the great William monarch of the land,  
 Combine, declare, invoke his great command;  
 Then Saxon, Dane, and Norman will unite,  
 Three kindred nations will, with matchless might,  
 Impress on time the glories of their name,  
 And, blended, live upon the page of fame."

Some here applaud, though slightly were they moved,  
 For of those chieftains, few the Norman loved.  
 Confusion came, and soon a tumult slight,  
 For in their choice they could no more unite.  
 Archbishop Stigand then in council rose,  
 And thus his thoughts did artfully disclose:  
 "Great princes, nobles, now assembled here  
 In high debate on interests grave and dear  
 To England's present weal, her future hope,  
 That she with dangers safely still may cope,  
 I'll give approval to the choice you make;  
 But 'tis our duty every view to take,



Of all that should the minds of patriots move,  
 The course to choose which wisdom may approve.  
 With close attention, with respect, I've heard  
 All you have said, and weighed each solemn word.  
 Yet much remains to make our judgments clear,  
 And to avert all danger, strife, and fear.  
 Remember well what our first duty is,  
 How grave the fault if we should choose amiss.  
 If wrong decree we on this day pronounce,  
 All future times will this our act denounce.  
 Abroad, around, are symptoms that alarm,  
 And warlike nations for aggression arm.

“The rights of Edgar, first should claim our care.  
 Yet, in this view, we the conviction share  
 That he is weak, and no respect commands,  
 By fame in arms, in this or foreign lands.  
 'Tis true through him, last scion of his race,  
 We surely now our line of monarchs trace ;  
 Though this descent the Saxons greatly prize,  
 Beyond this view a farther prospect lies.  
 When we recall our long distracted state,  
 Is he the man to guard the nation's fate ?  
 Beneath his banner would our warriors fight ?  
 Would he Norwegian, Norman, put to flight ?  
 Could he great William's fierce aggressions meet,  
 Or with proud foes, like unto him, compete ?  
 Has he the will, th' intrepid strength of soul,  
 O'er warlike chiefs to wield a stern control ?  
 Could he with firmness, with unwavering hand,  
 Strict order keep through this distracted land ?

If none of these, your duty now is plain,—  
 Respect his rank ; as Prince let him remain.  
 “ Next William comes ; the famous Norman, he  
 To sway our people, independent, free !  
 Shall we invite a foreign tyrant here,  
 To crush our freedom, fill our souls with fear ?  
 Our lands to seize, his fav’rites to endow,  
 Resign our birthright, place upon his brow  
 The English crown which mighty monarchs wore,  
 The crown which Alfred, Canute, Edward bore ?  
 To change our laws, our customs to destroy,  
 And every art of despot to employ ?  
 A cruel sway far o’er the realm to spread,  
 And blood of thousands on our soil to shed ?  
 Come he as conqueror, or as chosen king,  
 Unbounded mischief in his train he’ll bring.  
 If now invited, by supreme decree,  
 Fierce hordes of Normans would his followers be ;  
 And should invasion this fair isle assail,  
 Then valor, union, would alone prevail.  
 Could feeble sword such ruthless foe withstand,  
 Or drive his legions from our threatened land ?  
 It cannot be : a warlike king alone,  
 Must guard the kingdom and uphold the throne.  
 A native prince, whose skill and fame in arms  
 Would shield our homes from perils and alarms.  
 Unless some warrior meet them on the field,  
 Our hopes would fail, our doom too soon be sealed.  
 Long ages hence through scenes of nameless woe,  
 The fiery flood of conquest still would flow—

Would break the barriers which defend our rights,  
A rule impose which freedom ever blights.

“Harold remains ; on him our choice should fall ;  
Prince, Dane, and Saxon, he combines them all.  
Renowned in arms our glory to increase,  
Valiant, and wise in all the arts of peace,  
Beneath his rule all malecontents would bow ;  
He on our feuds prompt union would bestow,  
Would vanquish foes who hate the Saxon race,  
Secure repose, high policies would trace.  
He Edwin, Morecar, Tostig, would control,  
And others sway by his commanding soul.  
He the Norwegian, Norman, would defy,  
And teach us all on patriot fields to die :  
Piets, Scots, and Irish promptly to subdue,  
And strong defence on frontiers to renew.  
He with our armies, fired with martial flame,  
Would guard our homes, lend terror to our name.  
The time may come, perchance is not afar,  
When we shall waken to the sound of war.  
Proud hostile fleets around our coasts may sweep,  
And veteran foes come on us from the deep.  
For perilous signs, to sad and watchful eyes,  
In the near future darkly now arise.  
William’s ambition, his pretended claim,  
May wrap the realm, the western world, in flame.  
But ’tis not mine dire prophecies to tell  
To warlike chiefs, whom danger could not quell.  
’Tis said by some, that he a pledge hath made  
The Norman Duke, in his vast schemes to aid ;

That if this oath, thus sworn on relics true,  
 He mean to break, his ruin would ensue.  
 This none dispute : but still we know too well,  
 What dread mischance great Harold then befel.  
 Treachery, force, and secret fraud unite,  
 The loftiest name of England's sons to blight.  
 Men on their vows God's sanction may invoke,  
 But not for deeds which vengeance should provoke.  
 The act that's wrong and hateful in men's eyes  
 Can ne'er by oath have sanction in the skies :  
 And absolution would for such be given,  
 And sanctioned too by sacred laws of heaven.  
 This childish fear now banish from your minds :  
 An oath surprised, man's conscience never binds.  
 This valiant Prince my ready choice shall be,  
 For by his rule we should be safe and free.  
 Besides all this, the night when Edward died,  
 This choice he made ; by it let us abide.  
 This last, sad mandate of the king obey,  
 And from such dawn will spring a brighter day."

Thus Stigand spoke. A moment's silence there,  
 Then the whole Senate one accord declare.  
 The chieftains present at that great debate  
 To Stigand's choice their prompt adhesion state.  
 Prince Harold now they greet with loud acclaim,  
 And friendly voices shout his honored name.

There came a flush upon his princely brow,  
 As the quick blood went mantling to and fro.  
 Yet self-reliant, modest air he wore,  
 Though not unmoved by the great part he bore.

Forthwith they led him to a chair of state,  
 Whereon he sat, with mien and eye sedate.  
 The crown upon his head then Aldred placed,  
 And his high duties in brief words were traced.  
 And Harold swore in all things to pursue  
 The course prescribed, and passed in quick review.  
 In this great act then all those nobles share,  
 And hail him king, to him allegiance swear.  
 Harold, thus crowned, the sceptre did assume  
 Of England, clouded with impending doom.  
 He then arose and briefly all addressed,  
 While by his words those chiefs were awed, impressed :  
 " Most noble Thanes and Prelates of the land,  
 Whose high decree confers supreme command,  
 Before you now, as sovereign I appear,  
 Of this great realm, entrusted to my care.  
 Though not untried, yet partial the decree  
 Which has bestowed this sceptred trust on me.  
 The public weal, great interests on each hand,  
 From England's ruler wisdom will demand,  
 And courage too, great dangers soon to meet,  
 And, with firm hand, aggressions to defeat.  
 'Twill be my duty, in the nation's cause,  
 To govern justly and by well-known laws.  
 Upon our frontiers to the north and west,  
 To guard our soil, and see all wrongs redressed  
 With your assistance, and the people's love,  
 And the protection of high heaven above,  
 I hope the cause of justice to maintain,  
 And of this realm the glory to sustain :

On sea and land to foil revengeful foes,  
And shield the kingdom from invasion's woes."

Low murmurs of applause, of reverent fear,  
Arising there, now greet King Harold's ear ;  
Who, nor elated, nor in haughty mood,  
Of all the realm the chosen monarch stood.

But in the north a rising discontent  
Arose and spread soon o'er a wide extent.  
The northern Thanes reluctantly obey  
The monarch's rule, or yield to Saxon's sway.  
And chiefly now those chieftains might complain  
That the high claims of Mercian and of Dane  
In this decree no hearing could obtain ;  
Distrust some felt of Godwin's haughty race,  
In many a breast dark jealous thoughts had place ;  
Slowly at first the sullen treason grew,  
Then swift and strong in sweeping wrath it flew.  
Soon Harold's friends experienced just alarm,  
Lest the great chiefs the malcontents should arm,  
Should raise revolt against his kingly crown,  
To which true loyalty they ne'er had shown.  
The King intent his sceptre to maintain,  
Those northern Chieftains still had hope to gain ;  
He might remind them that on former day,  
A tyrant Prince his justice swept away :—  
When the fierce Tostig, with relentless hand,  
Had dismay spread through the Northumbrian land ;  
For though a brother that deep wrong had done,  
Stern retribution those great chiefs had won.  
'Mong many friends conspicuous for their zeal,  
One then there was to whom he made appeal,—

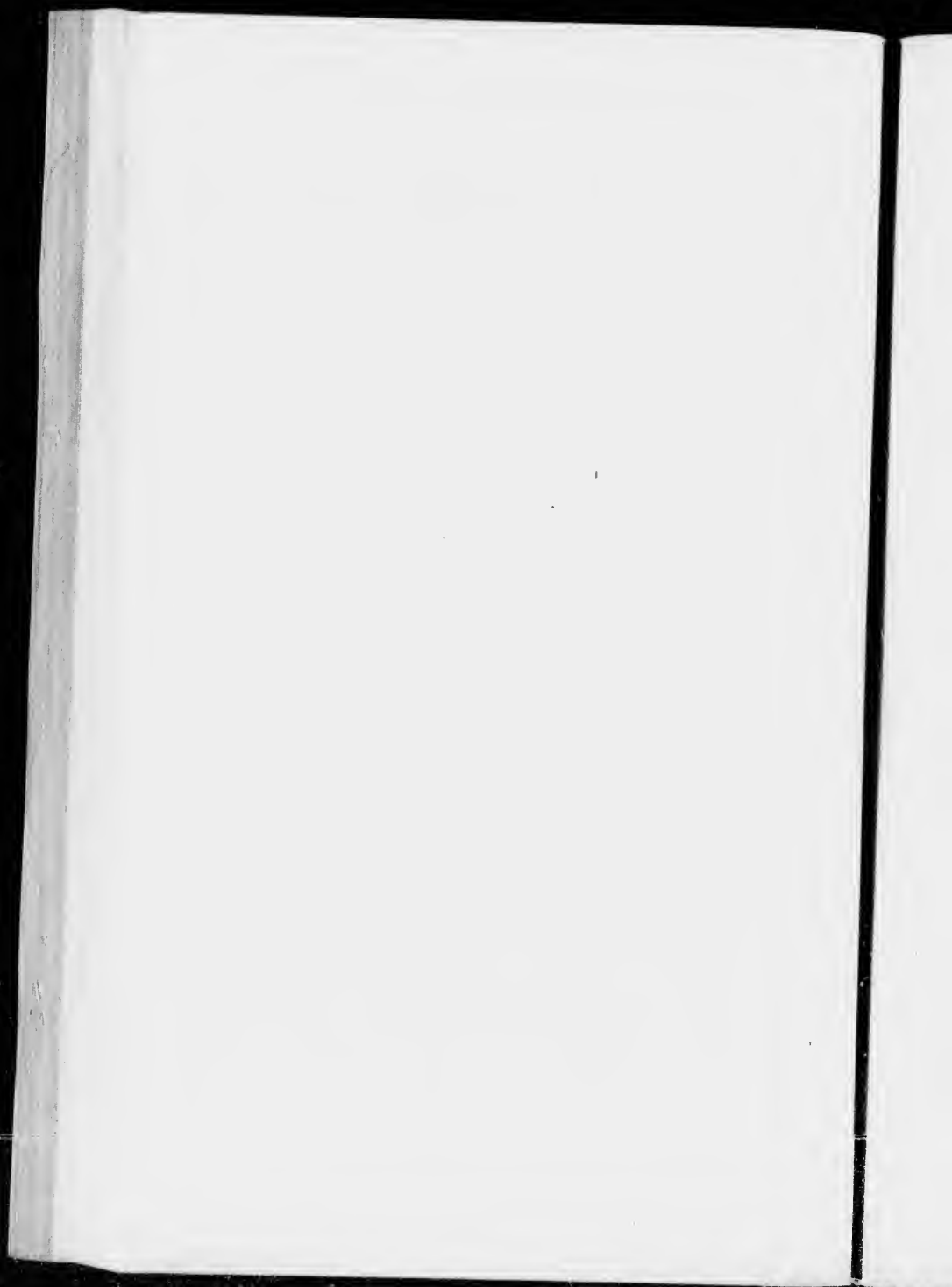
A holy man, nor could more learned be found,  
 Nor one whose sanctity was more renowned,—  
 Grave Bishop Wulfstan, famed in many a clime,  
 Nor purer light had shone in that far time.  
 Great Worcester's see that reverend prelate held  
 In those dark days, and Harold was impelled,  
 Or deemed it wise, his word and aid to claim,  
 That he might lend the influence of his name.  
 The King and Wulfstan, with some councillors true,  
 Proud Morecar sought, and the young Edwin too.  
 Of these great Earls, the father now was gone,  
 Mercia's lord and Leofric's great son.  
 In former times, through periods of great woe,  
 The King had been their father Alfgar's foe ;  
 By Harold's arms o'ercome, in bloody scene,  
 He exile, outlaw, through long years had been.  
 Restored at length, he o'er East Anglia reigned,  
 The Earldom Harold, in his youth, had gained.  
 Long feuds between their rival houses raged,  
 And time had scarce their bitter hate assuaged.  
 Holy influence Wulfstan then could wield  
 O'er these great men, who soon a hearing yield,  
 With other chiefs of fame and power there.  
 Calmly he spoke, did Harold's claims declare,  
 And prompt their anger softened and subdued,  
 And with high hopes distrustful minds imbued.  
 King Harold, too, by many a promise made,  
 And courteous speech, these warlike chieftains swayed.  
 He pledges gave, their sacred rights to guard,  
 And they reliant, took his royal word.

When he their rights had promised thus to save,  
 They to the monarch true allegiance gave.  
 They him proclaimed, his cause they made their own,  
 And firm devotion promised to the crown.  
 Though truer friends, perchance, King Harold found,  
 The word they kept by which they thus were bound.

The great Earl Morcar, whose illustrious name  
 Was through the land far heralded by fame,  
 In stately home hard by the ancient deep,  
 Had his abode, upon a rocky steep,—  
 A lofty pile, 'mid ancient trees alone,  
 A lasting monument of ages gone ;  
 A castle old, defended by a tower,  
 Which long defied the Northman and his power.  
 With him there dwelt, a brother's fondest care,  
 A sister, loved Editha named, the fair ;  
 A gentle Princess, in her youth's sweet prime,  
 The noblest damsel of the northern clime.  
 Her faultless form, her soft but high-born eye,  
 And stately mien of inborn majesty,  
 Beaming with soul, and beauty's matchless grace,  
 Bespoke the lineage of a lofty race.  
 Though softest smiles would tenderness disclose,  
 Yet through them all spoke sadness and repose,  
 Veiling with hues of a transparent gloom,  
 The deeper sorrows of too early doom.  
 Grief's secret languor, prelude of despair,  
 Whose shadows softened, but could not impair  
 The nameless charm which round her beauty hung,  
 And made her peerless that great race among.



Despite the distance which divides them now,  
She looks too fondly on that princely brow.  
Oft she had heard in these her father's halls,  
Of that renown she eagerly recalls.  
And Harold saw that maiden of the north,  
Adorned with beauty and with matchless worth ;  
Nor cold his heart, nor e'er had been to love—  
In lofty natures lighted from above ;  
That heart, though sad and long perplexed with care,  
To beauty yields what time could ne'er impair.  
Darkened by grief, all dim and shadowed o'er,  
'Twas now foredoomed, and shadows went before.  
Soon in their breasts the dawn of love arose,  
And looks and words quick did that love disclose.  
The King and she their mutual pledges gave ;  
Too soon, too late for his untimely grave.  
Time passed away. The Monarch claimed her hand  
Of the great Earl, who sought not to withstand  
Great suit so urged, but yields with anxious heart  
That sister loved, with whom he thus must part.  
Throughout the land this alliance soon was known,  
And all now swore allegiance to his throne.



## BOOK SEVENTH.

### ARGUMENT.

William, Duke of Normandy, hunts the wild bear in the forest of Rouverault, near Rouen.—Description of the hunt.—William returns to Rouen, and upon arriving, is informed by letter from a friend in England of the death of Edward the Confessor and of the immediate accession of Harold to the throne of that kingdom.—His emotions upon receiving that intelligence described.—He convokes a select council of his nobles and friends, whose advice he seeks in this critical conjuncture.—The speeches made on this occasion.—It is determined that an Embassy be sent to Harold for the purpose of reminding him of his great oath at Bayeux and of his solemn promises to William; and should his reply to that message prove unsatisfactory, a second should be sent, requiring him to comply in part with his previous engagements, by espousing Adelize, the daughter of William.—Bohun, a Norman noble, is chosen as Envoy.—His arrival at the court of Harold and his interview with the King.—The message and Harold's reply given.—He returns to Normandy, after having been hospitably entertained by Harold.—Upon receiving the King of England's reply, the Duke of Normandy sends a second message.—Bohun's second journey to England and the marriage of Harold.—William's last message and Harold's reply given.—The deep threats and anger of the Duke of Normandy upon learning that the King of England not only absolutely refuses compliance with his demands, but peremptorily prohibits all future intercourse, or negotiation on the subject.

Edward the Confessor to his rest hath gone,  
And Saxon Harold sits on England's throne.  
That warlike prince, with sceptre and with sword,  
The kingdom rules, as rightful, sovereign lord.  
And surely then, not by the breath of fame,  
To Normandy these startling tidings came.  
'Tis said the tale, dark wing'd with future woe,  
Flies still the swiftest of all things below;

By night, by day, its devious passage finds,  
 Soars thro' the storm, outstrips the waves and winds ;  
 And though a vagrant on its pathless way,  
 'Twill whisper sorrow on too near a day.  
 By the great Norman far too soon were known,  
 The monarch's death, his loss of England's crown.  
 Short time elapsed, tho' adverse winds delayed,  
 Ere trusty message these dread news conveyed.  
 But when the courier from the English shore  
 'To William's court the fatal missive bore,  
 The Norman prince, his nobles and his suite  
 Had sought the wood with hounds and horses fleet.  
 The warrior sov'reigns of great Rollo's race  
 Were matchless hunters, mighty in the chase :—  
 Dark, shady forests guarded were, and grew  
 From age to age luxuriant to the view.  
 For many a league these wildernesses stood,  
 O'er hill and lowland and by mountain flood.  
 'Mid ancient trees and thickets low between,  
 And winding streams, long vistas might be seen, }  
 Where many a struggle, bloody death had been. }  
 Wild haunts they were, well suited to engage  
 The sylvan conflicts of that ruder age—  
 From times long gone, beneath their gloomy shades,  
 Through sweeping vales and lonely forest glades,  
 When wintry blasts resounded through the woods,  
 With the far echoes of descending floods ;  
 In spring's first bloom and summer waning there,  
 Thro' yellow autumn with its blithesome air ;

The Norman princes, nobles of that day,  
With eager joy pursued their savage prey.  
The march of conquest, pillage, sword and flame,  
O'er regions fair had borne the Norman name :  
Yet those rude pirates of remoter times  
Had felt the influence of these milder climes,  
And their descendants gentler arts display,  
As the long years, as centuries roll away ;  
So this great prince, the mightiest of his line,  
Did hunting, war and policy combine.  
It happened thus, that William and his court,  
With noble knights, accustomed to resort  
To these abodes in search of savage game,  
Had sought a forest, Rouverault by name ;  
There to pursue as they had done before,  
Through peril's paths the wild, the tusky boar.  
The sun arose with splendor on that day,  
And forth they went rejoicing on their way.  
Short sword and spear the princely Norman bore,  
And hunter's cloak upon his shoulders wore.  
Small cap of velvet did his head adorn,  
Such as were then by knights in hunting worn.  
A steed he rode of purest Norman race,  
Of ample size and broken to the chase.  
Fearless he looked o'er all the mightiest there,  
Among great nobles armed with sword and spear.  
His sinewy form, cast in heroic mould  
And dauntless eye, of strength and courage told ;  
Such force athletic rarely could be seen,  
And gave that chief a stern and warlike mien.

Upon a palfrey fair Matilda rode  
 By her great lord toward the frowning wood ;  
 And still on him would rest her anxious eye,  
 In secret prayer no peril might be nigh.  
 And lovely ones, that matin hour to share,  
 Followed by pages, young and gay, were there ;—  
 With lordly men, the Paladins of war,  
 Tho' lesser lights around one mighty star.  
 Great hunters, too, and well did they unite,  
 Steeds, skill, and hounds and all that could excite  
 The sullen boar and force him quick to bay,  
 Or drive him bounding through the forest way.  
 Now the fair Princess, on a gentle mound  
 Halts by the way to view the scene around,  
 Where far o'er hill, and plain, and valley lay,  
 Effulgent glories of the early day ;—  
 Thence, with her suite she sought Rouen again,  
 While he rode onward with his knightly train.  
 The wood these gain, on chargers proudly borne,  
 While through the forest sounds the huntsmen's horn.  
 A league or less within the woodland scene,  
 They mark the traces where the boar had been.  
 They eager wait ; and quick the leading hound  
 Scents on the track and near the boar is found.  
 Aroused he stands, then bounding speeds away,  
 Along a path which thro' the forest lay.  
 The dogs pursue and all press boldly on :  
 But now ahead, both boar and hounds are gone.  
 Not long they follow through the winding way,  
 Ere round he whirls and fiercely stands at bay.

Quick toss'd on high the foremost dog is slain,  
The rest surround him but approach in vain.  
The Norman chief, the first where danger press'd,  
Spurs in advance, confronts the furious beast.  
Two hounds lay near him, weltering in their blood,  
As many more, there bleeding tottering stood.  
Some still are bounding round the bloody scene,  
With space secure them and the boar between.  
The savage monster up to fury wrought,  
Nor shunn'd the fight, nor the encounter sought.  
The wary hunter eyes the brute enraged,  
Quick weighs the struggle now to be engaged.  
The steed, with ears erect and head on high,  
Snorts at the sight and restless grows his eye ;  
Th' intrepid rider knows no earthly fear,  
And prompt in hand is poised the fatal spear.  
Swift sped the weapon, yet with erring flight ;  
The boar it strikes, but swerving to the right,  
Through the thick hide the point diverging flies,  
And in the earth its force expended dies.  
Writhing, frantic from the bleeding wound,  
Forward he plunges with terrific bound.  
Straight at the prince the furious rush is made,  
And in his path all now is prostrate laid.  
With rabid tusk, beslimed with foam and blood,  
He rends the shoulder of the noble steed.  
As cut by knife of broad and keenest blade,  
A ghastly wound of wondrous length is made.  
Uprears the horse, the two fore-feet in air,  
And William's skill must all its strength prepare.

He wheels him round, quick from the saddle glides,  
 And for the fight a readier arm provides.  
 But now Fitzosborne, eager, watches near,  
 With fears aroused and huntsman's ready spear;—  
 The weapon flies, deep through the flesh descends,  
 And in the shoulder all its force expends.  
 In William's hand bright gleams the naked blade  
 Of his short sword for such adventure made.  
 The flashing steel, now dreadful to the view,  
 With strenuous arm across the throat he drew.  
 Forth spouts the blood, the boar sinks to his knees,  
 And quick the Norman doth that moment seize :  
 The sword is raised, is plunged into his side,  
 Twice, thrice, and strong, in quick succession plied.  
 The vanquished brute wheels feebly round and round,  
 Then totters, reels, falls prone upon the ground.  
 Now all approach, his wondrous bulk admire,  
 And crowd around to see him there expire.  
 He weaker grows and gasps at length for breath  
 One spasm more, his limbs relax in death.  
 The Norman Prince to Rouen now returned,  
 And there the wreck of many a hope he learned.  
 When this announcement to the duke was made,  
 And Harold's deeds were artfully portrayed,  
 He neither words, nor fury could restrain,  
 Nor his firm mind its self-control maintain ;  
 Fierce oaths he swore long pacing to and fro,  
 Amazed, incensed and breathing vengeance now.  
 As when the lion springs upon his prey,  
 And sees unhurt his victim speed away,

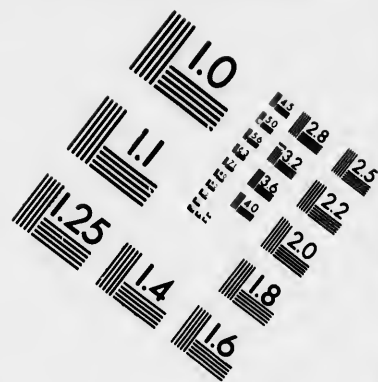
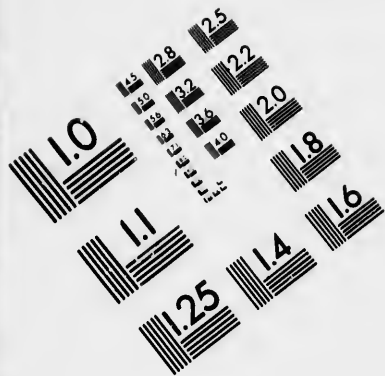


His blood-shot eye pursues him in his flight,  
 And glares in fury 'mid the gloom of night ;  
 The roar of rage, of hunger then resounds,  
 With deeper horror through the desert bounds ;  
 So William now, his grasp upon a crown,  
 Chafes in the wrath of highest hopes o'erthrown ;—  
 Then calm he grew, though still were unsuppress'd,  
 The stormy passions raging in his breast.

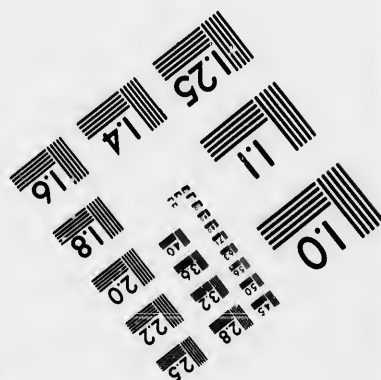
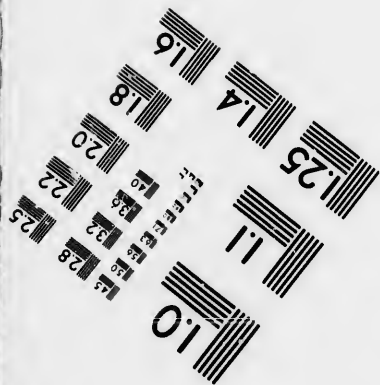
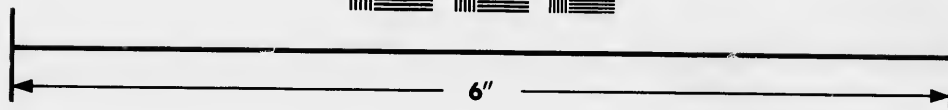
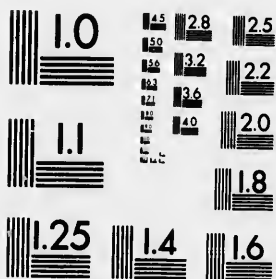
From dreams of empire sudden he awoke,  
 And promptly now a council did convoke,—  
 Odo, Fitzosberne, and Lanfranc came there,  
 And others too their Sov'reign's schemes to share.  
 Soon all assembled. Long that council sat,  
 In anxious thought, in calm yet keen debate.  
 And William first, deep anger in his breast,  
 In solemn words the council thus addressed :

“ Illustrious friends, great guardians of my throne,  
 My firm support through many a peril gone,  
 To-day I learned, and that from truthful source,  
 King Edward's death and Harold's perjured course.  
 The aged Prince with years and sorrow worn,  
 And by disease and many a care o'erborne,  
 A few days since did yield his latest breath,  
 And sought repose, the long repose of death.  
 The following morn and with unseemly haste,  
 This pious monarch in his tomb was placed.  
 Nor passed that day ere Harold's hand too bold,  
 Before the relics of the king were cold,  
 The sceptre seized, unmindful of his fame,  
 In spite of all that Edgar's rights could claim ;





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Regardless, too, of that great oath he swore,  
 And of the sanction such engagement bore.  
 That oath that promise to my cause were given  
 On holy shrine, and in the face of heaven.  
 His solemn vow I need not here recall,  
 On sacred relics, sworn before you all.  
 It was, besides, King Edward's wish well known,  
 That I one day should sit upon his throne.  
 'Tis my resolve for your and my renown,  
 As God's my judge, in arms to claim the crown,  
 To cite Duke Harold to renounce his state,  
 Nor of my right the smallest part abate.  
 Your counsel grave I gladly now would share,  
 And your advice implore you to declare."

A pause ensued and deep were all impressed,  
 And anxious thought each painfully oppressed.  
 Odo at length the gloomy silence broke,  
 And thus to William first in order spoke :  
 "Most puissant Prince ! since counsel we demand  
 From these thy nobles of the Norman land,  
 No message I to Harold would transmit,  
 Let him forswear, usurp, as he deem fit.  
 The perjured deed, the wrongful act is done ;  
 Nor, if disposed, could he renounce the throne.  
 Of his own race, he claims and keeps the lead,  
 And merits, too, by many a warlike deed,  
 Free chosen, crowned by a great nation's will,  
 Proud England's throne in Edward's place to fill,  
 That prince thou knowest his valor and his pride,  
 And by that choice he firmly will abide.

'Twere idle, then, compliance to demand  
 From the great ruler of so famed a land.  
 That martial Prince, renown'd and skill'd in arms,  
 Bred up in camps, inured to war's alarms,  
 With scorn would answer—your just claim disown—  
 If now requested to renounce a throne.  
 I would consult the Council of the State,  
 And levy armies for this fierce debate.  
 Be firm, be just ; decisive be thy course,  
 And claim thy rights directly and by force."

This council bold Prince Odo did declare,  
 And great the weight it had with many there.  
 Then rose Fitzosberne, dear to William's heart,  
 And his advice thus briefly did impart :  
 " Illustrious Prince ! my first advice would be,  
 No message now to send beyond the sea.  
 At once convoke the vassals of the land ;  
 To them declare what your just rights demand.  
 If they applaud the measures you would take,  
 And your great cause their own will truly make,  
 Then armies, fleets, collect from every source,  
 And back remonstrance by o'erwhelming force.  
 Then I would send some noble of renown,  
 To summon Harold to renounce the crown ;  
 And to avert all chance of future strife,  
 Give him the Princess Adelize to wife.  
 If he refuse, in these essentials fail,  
 He then should know, by war you must prevail,  
 A war foreboding ruin and disgrace,  
 To his great house and all the Saxon race ;

That with the chivalry of many a land,  
 Your foes must war in conflict hand to hand ;  
 Most one so perjured, lost to sense of shame,  
 So dead to honor and a warrior's fame.  
 To urge your right, your right to England's throne,  
 These are the means, and this the way alone,  
 Befitting you and your most righteous cause,  
 And of your realm will claim the just applause.  
 Then will great chieftains lead their valiant bands,  
 And bear your sway o'er all the Saxon lands."

Full many now deep consultation hold ;  
 Some were for peace, but most for action bold.  
 The Prince, though calm, with keen and boding eye  
 Perceives them cold and wavering in reply.  
 Some rose to speak, who all their fears explained ;  
 Those feebly spoke, in silence these remained.  
 The Prince, at length, tho' patient of debate,  
 Requests that each should his opinion state.

Among the nobles then assembled there,  
 Was one great name, and long renown'd in war,—  
 Raoule, a Norman of the earliest race,  
 Who through three centuries his line could trace,  
 And in the lapse of generations past,  
 Undying lustre on that name was cast,  
 His fiery youth, his manhood's brighter day,  
 His wisdom now when these had passed away,  
 Were all devoted to the Norman crown,  
 His country's glory and his chief's renown :  
 From his first years Duke William he had loved,  
 And through dark times had his affection proved.

When thickening perils round his boyhood grew,  
 Raoule was there as brave as he was true.  
 On many a field, when death was all around,  
 Raoule and William sternly kept their ground ;  
 And side by side, 'midst living and the slain,  
 They spread dismay and slaughter o'er the plain,  
 On battle's day, and in the weary camp,  
 Naught could his courage, naught his zeal could damp.  
 And through the starry, anxious watch of night,  
 From midnight hour until the dawn of light,  
 William and he were oft together seen,  
 Wand'ring around the watchfire lights between ;  
 'Mid silent ranks where sleeping warriors lay,  
 And dreamt of glory on the coming day.  
 When years had fled, and in the course of time,  
 That warlike prince had reached stern manhood's prime,  
 Raoule he had still ever by his side,  
 In peril calm, in council a true guide.  
 Full the score years that chieftain now had seen,  
 Yet clear his mind as it had ever been ;  
 Now from his seat serenely he arose,  
 And thus to William did his thoughts disclose :  
 " Great Prince and Nobles—friends all present here—  
 To you my counsel I would now declare :  
 Old I have grown and weak 'mong warlike men,  
 Though once my name was not unknown. Since then  
 Long years have pass'd. Through many a troubled scene  
 The trials of my later life have been ;  
 Though of all else long since I was bereft,  
 High hopes I have for Prince and country left.



Before my duty have I ever quailed ?  
Or in devotion to my Sovereign failed ?  
Long my land's interest honor I have sought,  
And for its safety, glory I have fought  
Beside the Princes of the Norman race,  
Who back to Rollo their high lineage trace.  
That famous Prince and his companions won  
This sov'reign land, when warlike deeds were done ;  
And the long line of matchless warriors since,  
Did for their subjects oft their zeal evince.  
They've fixed our frontiers, firm, secure, afar,  
And ruled this realm with high and zealous care.  
From Anjou, Brittany our soil extends,  
To that deep sea which all the north defends ;  
From River Eure to the Atlantic coast,  
A fair dominion we may proudly boast.  
By neighboring states our name is held in awe,  
And what we dietate, they obey as law.  
In all that makes, maintains a nation's power,  
Great we have grown—are growing every hour ;  
Is not such heritage enough for you ?  
Or must you ever seek for more, for new ?  
Would you add England to the Norman crown,  
And cast the diadem of Rollo down ?  
What sacrifice already has been made !  
What hard exactions on our land are laid !  
If conquest still your policy should be,  
When from such burdens will our soil be free ?  
Though our best blood, our treasure you command,  
Must this great people a new tax withstand ?

But these I pass : if in this war you fail,  
What should such waste of toil and life avail ?  
To what result would this great struggle lead ?  
Weakened at home, reduced in fame abroad—  
Not mighty Xerxes in his dread defeat,  
Nor the ten thousand in their far retreat ;  
Nor the dark tale of Carthaginian woes,  
Nor Varus' legions slaughtered by their foes,  
Would yield example of such doom forlorn  
As then would mark you with immortal scorn.  
But rich in all that nations covet most,  
With fertile regions and a vast sea-coast,  
If in this enterprise you should prevail,  
Nor once your arms, nor policy should fail,  
To guard such conquests armies must remain,  
And be augmented by perpetual drain  
Of all the youth, the flower of our race,  
Which future ages scarcely will replace.  
England the seat of empire would become,—  
England would be, remain the Norman's home,—  
England would rise, would flourish more and more ;  
We would decline, would languish from that hour ;  
Toward our frontiers armies would advance,  
The German hosts and chivalry of France ;  
Thus the fair Normandy would be undone,  
And soon in clouds would set her glorious sun.  
So that proud country we have cherished most,  
In the great world of nations would be lost.  
My counsel is our empire to maintain  
And from invasion wisely to abstain."

So spoke Raoule. His thoughts deep echoes found,  
 And many listened with respect profound ;  
 But most Duke William thoughtful did appear :  
 Dark grew his brow, while with attentive ear  
 Each word he weigh'd which from the speaker fell,  
 In later times remembered but too well.

Here Geoffoy of Coutances of noble mien,  
 A prelate learned, up rose with eye serene :—  
 In paradox he oft and boldly dealt,  
 But with deep thought on loftiest subjects dwelt.  
 To his acute—his vast and ardent mind,  
 In its wide range too bold and unconfined,  
 History's page its pictured scenes unrolled,  
 And science, too, its treasures did unfold.  
 Skill'd in discourse—quick, fluent and prepared,  
 He in reply his counsel thus declared :

“ It hath been said, and said indeed so well,  
 That on these words your anxious thoughts must dwell :  
 Should an invasion be the course pursued,  
 And by defeat, your great attempt subdued,  
 A fatal blow would fall on Norman power,  
 And mighty woes mark that ill-fated hour ;  
 That great exactions bow the nation down,  
 And greater still would then be widely known ;  
 That hostile nations would invade our soil,  
 And make our homes, our lands and wealth their spoil ;  
 That England, mighty both on land and wave,  
 Would o'er our fall her flag of triumph wave ;  
 And this great realm, the famous Normandy,  
 Low in the scale of living states would be.

You now are great, prosperous and renown'd  
 And long success your wisdom still hath crown'd,  
 No conquest now our greatness can enhance,  
 Nor should our fate, our future rest on chance.  
 "But, if you fail, the Normans still the same,  
 Renown'd in arms and of immortal fame,  
 Would this disaster, greater still would meet,  
 And stronger grow and wiser from defeat.  
 The warlike spirit of a martial race  
 Would soon your thinn'd, your weaken'd ranks replace.  
 Oft our chief strength from our own suffering grows;  
 So mightier armies would confront your foes,  
 And pour the deluge of their fiery wrath,  
 O'er all resistance in your onward path.  
 What foe will seek, pursue you to your door,  
 Or risk a conflict on this hostile shore?  
 And surely now a warlike race will bear  
 Some burdens more to wage a righteous war.  
 If you relax, grow faint in cause so just,  
 You prove unworthy of a nation's trust.  
 Should the great Normans, weakness now evince,  
 Disgrace their country and desert their prince,  
 They would decline, would soil their ancient fame,  
 And lose their lofty, awe-inspiring name.  
 Methinks such enterprise, such great appeal,  
 Should rouse their valor and incite their zeal.  
 But what of failure and dread war's alarms,  
 To warriors famed, invincible in arms?  
 Led by a chief, whose bright, ascending star,  
 Guides him in peace and rules the fate of war,

You'll march in triumph o'er a prostrate land,  
 And wrest the sword from Harold's perjured hand.

“ Assume, 'tis said, complete success attained,  
 And then behold your barren triumphs gained !  
 'Tis not the interest of our Prince alone,  
 Nor Harold's crimes, nor yet the Saxon crown ;  
 'Tis one great people and a kindred race,  
 Which seeks by arms, to conquer, nay, efface  
 A nation proud, by valor still upheld,  
 Though to its doom all darkly now impelled,—  
 A work of war and settlement combined,  
 In which stern conquest no repose will find.  
 Vast at first view, its end seems great, sublime,—  
 Just in the present, great in future time.  
 Yet all is force : one race must be estranged,  
 Their laws perchance, their language must be changed ;  
 And though subdued, nay overcome by fate,  
 They'll view their conqueror with undying hate ;  
 Revolt must come, and bleeding on will hold  
 To far traditions, which can ne'er grow cold.  
 Then add to these the wounds, the fatal strife,  
 That mark the struggle for a nation's life,—  
 These and like thoughts, the wisest here have weighed,  
 And stern reproach to war and conquest made.

“ It may be just, in venturing to reply—  
 To view our duty with a keener eye—  
 The work of conquest oft its woes redeems,  
 And, more than that, to man a blessing seems.  
 Mysterious laws still rule the moral scene,  
 And through the past their course divine hath been.

War stirs, impels the dormant minds of men ;—  
 Renews their hopes, fresh life infuses then ;—  
 New laws, ideas, systems spreads abroad ;—  
 Diffuses culture with the word of God ;—  
 Throughout all time, the iron arm of might  
 Enforced, enforces what we deem the right.  
 Far in the East, beneath her cloudless skies,  
 The storied realm of early conquest lies.  
 We turn, alas ! to many a famed abode,  
 Where suns of glory o'er these lands have glowed ;  
 Back, back through dim, renown'd and distant times—  
 To wondrous scenes, 'mid soft and azure climes—  
 O'er fertile plains, to cities famous old  
 And fabled gardens of that orient world—  
 O'er vale and mount and streams that living smile,  
 And wind afar by many a shady isle,  
 Whose shores are wooded, dark with olden trees,  
 Which spread their foliage to the passing breeze,  
 And, caught from flowers all wildly blooming there,  
 The sweetest perfumes fill the summer air.  
 Æolian echoes of the eve, the morn,  
 By sighing winds through sacred groves are borne.  
 But even here, deep slumbering on their thrones,  
 Sat, steeped in vice, old Earth's imperial drones :  
 And all was crime, dark ruin and repose,  
 Until a warrior, conquering king arose.  
 The star of empire Alexander leads,  
 And o'er all Asia his dominion spreads.  
 Astonished nations see his car approach,  
 And veteran armies on their march encroach.

They hasten trembling to dark fields of fame,  
 To add new lustre to their conqueror's name.  
 Tottering empires, tyrannies forlorn,  
 Relentless systems, cruel and outworn,  
 Were by his arms all swept away, o'erborne. }  
 What deathless glory he hath left behind !  
 What blazing light was that immortal mind !  
 Had he in Macedonia held his sway,  
 Nor e'er gone forth upon his meteor way !  
 If he of peace, of ease alone could boast,  
 Perchance his kingdom that great prince had lost.  
 Too early death removed him from the scene,  
 Where his renown, triumphant course had been.  
 Had riper years the youthful hero schooled,  
 How blest the land, his warlike virtues ruled !  
 What happy realms had grown beneath his sway,  
 When on the world had dawn'd that cloudless day !  
 Then Grecian thought had realized her dreams,  
 And wak'ning nations shared her brighter beams.  
 Still first in arms, alike in arts of peace,  
 He looms through time the foremost man of Greece.  
 Bright, hapless Greece ! oh ! still remembered well,  
 Those plains on which thy patriot heroes fell :—  
 Thy feats of arms which there were proudly done,  
 And fields of honor future glory won.  
 In times remote, from thy immortal coasts  
 All vanquish'd fled proud Persia's baffled hosts.  
 Names, deeds and thoughts together there unite,  
 And spread a halo o'er that land of light.  
 Yes ! see what Greece by valor, arms sustained—  
 What fertile realms, what mighty name attained !

Was it by peace the Romans too prevailed ?  
 Did they debate until they were assailed ?  
 Did not their legions on frontiers afar,  
 Unfurl the standards of perpetual war ?  
 Did not her sword, thro' great and warlike times,  
 Maintain her conquests o'er barbarian climes ?  
 And 'mid the wreck of ages, at this hour,  
 We trace the march of her imperial power ;  
 Where'er the dreams of her ambition led,  
 Where'er her sway and civilization spread,  
 The wisdom, genius and the fate of Rome  
 Will live, instruct us thro' far times to come.  
 What wealth and power Rome and Greece could boast !  
 When will their laws, their intellect be lost ?  
 They ne'er can die, till long and deepening thought  
 The minds of men yet loftier truths have taught.  
 Tho' pale those rays, tho' cold may shine those beams,  
 They'll light our race, till lost in holier dreams.  
 Great Clovis built an empire in the West,  
 With letters, laws, and Christ's religion blest.  
 Behold proud Martel's, Charlemagne's great name !  
 Each spread his empire left enduring fame.  
 And you, proud Normans, mighty deeds have done :  
 What reach of empire and what dread renown !  
 With love of war your dauntless minds inflamed,  
 On every shore dominion you have claimed.  
 See what great Rollo and his arms achieved,  
 From him what sway your Princes have received !  
 By conquest this was all secured, obtained,  
 And by your arms, by laws are still maintained.



Behold the Saxons, Danes on England's soil ;  
 How great their conquest, and how vast their spoil !  
 They still advance, how wide their limits grow,  
 And soon they'll seek your rule to overthrow.  
 Beyond the seas your sway should now extend,  
 Your power increase, your empire to defend.  
 If Harold reign, beneath his great command,  
 They will o'erwhelm you both by sea and land.  
 Now gain success, let victory be your own,  
 At once and boldly, seize the English throne. }  
 Then vast your glory, great is your renown. }  
 Secure repose will follow your success,  
 And saints on high such sacred cause will bless.  
 Both races soon united will become,  
 In an enduring still more glorious home.  
 A mighty empire proudly will arise,  
 Whose far renown will reach unto the skies.  
 O'er every land, your fame and power will sweep,  
 While veteran valor guards you on the deep.  
 Two kindred nations will unite, combine,  
 And your great star o'er distant ages shine."

The poet thus long, eagerly declaimed,  
 But few the minds by these high words inflamed.  
 Tho' slight his influence in an hour so grave,  
 A sophist's answer to Raoule he gave.  
 Now great Lanfranc, with calm yet beaming eye,  
 Rose slowly there to counsel not reply.  
 On his clear brow shone the pure light of thought,  
 And knowledge vast, by deep enquiry sought.  
 His check was pale : long vigils of the mind,  
 Through lonely years had left their hues behind ;

And in his tone, his gesture and his speech,  
 Something denotes a life without reproach ;  
 His measured words did every mind arrest,  
 Roused better hopes, and soothed dark fears to rest.  
 With thought concise and cautiously he spoke,  
 While these mild accents the deep silence broke :  
 " Great Prince and Nobles ! men of brightest fame,  
 Now varying counsels different views proclaim ;  
 'Tis not my hope to reconcile dissent,  
 Nor to my words to gain all men's assent.  
 Whate'er deep thought and ardent minds can do,  
 To scan that future, veiled to human view,  
 Our task should be ; still seeking to explore  
 For beacon-lights on time's unravelled shore ;—  
 Foresee where storms, where perils may arise,  
 If e'er disclosed to man's enquiring eyes ;  
 O'er the far past, the retrospect of years,  
 And present times, and these our hopes, our fears,  
 Hold calm reflection ; honor Heaven's law,  
 And from the whole some just conclusion draw.  
 Duke Harold's crimes his friends can not disown,  
 His broken vow, his seizure of the crown,  
 An oath on relics, sacred and enshrined,  
 A throne, great Prince, for you and your's designed.  
 Full in our presence Harold's vows were made ;  
 We saw his hand upon the altar laid ;  
 Each word we heard, that promise spoken free,  
 An oath as sacred as man's oath could be.  
 'Twere strange, indeed, if pledges so defined,  
 Should not a Prince's, Christian's conscience bind.

We too have heard, and all have so believed,  
 (And why in this should any be deceived ?)  
 That Edward's love had chosen you as heir,  
 And for that trust your hopes did long prepare.  
 If this be so, and all we hear be true,  
 Harold is false to him, his oath and you.  
 Nor can foul deeds like these be e'er forgiven ;  
 They are just causes in the sight of Heaven,  
 Altho' indeed, dread war we may deplore,  
 Why you should seek, in arms, the English shore.  
 Pursue th' usurper where he may be found,  
 And hurl him perjured, vanquished to the ground.  
 That this is just, commanded from on high,  
 No knight, no prince, no Christian, will deny.  
 The voice of martyrs speaking from the grave,  
 And living saints would this great act approve.  
 So he who rules, chastises, and destroys,  
 And for his ends, our feeble strength employs,  
 Will aid your arms, breathe blessings on your cause,  
 Your rights maintain and vindicate his laws.

" But what the course, great Prince, you should pursue,  
 That sure success, not failure, may ensue ?  
 And here in passing, let us first reflect,  
 On the resistance you must now expect.  
 A mighty Prince of valor and renown,  
 As Edward's heir, hath seized the English Crown.  
 We know in truth, and not from rumor's voice,  
 That of the nation he's the general choice.  
 And tho' to you a perjured prince he stands,  
 So known in this, soon known in other lands.

Yet to his aid the Saxon, Dane, will fly,  
 And in his cause with patriot ardor die.  
 'Tis plain you must for future war prepare,  
 And in each step, advance with cautious care.  
 Great are your aims, nay, hazardous indeed,  
 And so, great Prince, your enterprise will need  
 A holy sanction, and a firm support,  
 To rouse men's courage,—give success in short.  
 If war you make and undefined the cause,  
 How gain good men's, where find your own applause?  
 The warlike usages of former times  
 May still prevail in rude and barbarous climes;  
 But in this age, this realm of glorious fame,  
 Such deeds would be unworthy of your name.  
 And one great duty of the Norman race  
 Should be henceforth, for ever to efface,  
 From their bright annals doubtful acts that cast  
 Their shadows o'er both present times and past  
 Your manners, laws, and our religion teach,  
 Your loftiest ends you peacefully should reach.  
 Before dread war 'gainst Harold you declare,  
 Before your fleets and legions you prepare,  
 To him you should an honored envoy send,  
 Without proclaiming what your thoughts intend;  
 Nor anger show, nor vehemence evince,  
 Nor use the language of an injured Prince.  
 His oath recal in words all free from scorn,  
 That sacred oath on holy relics sworn.  
 Exact no promise, full or incomplete,  
 Nor long details would I in aught repeat.

If he refuse his pledges to fulfil,  
 I would propose a further message still.  
 Of him require, once more, and this the last,  
 To calm the future and to heal the past,  
 And to avert all chance of warlike strife  
 That he should take fair Adelizo to wife.  
 The rest concede your purpose still to gain,  
 And true advantage in the end obtain.  
 Though this be just, 'twill fail his mind to move,  
 Then Papal sanction will your cause approve.  
 Publish afar the oath by Harold sworn,  
 That on his name may rest eternal scorn.  
 Proclaim yourself king Edward's rightful heir,  
 And your resolve to Christendom declare.  
 In vain you've sued,—you have recourse to might,  
 And by your arms seek to obtain your right;  
 And so compelled, your cause is plain, is just,  
 Then in the God of battles place your trust."

Thus spoke the man of thought; and long applause  
 Greets his discourse, pronounced in William's cause.  
 And in the torrent of approval there,  
 All present seemed with loud acclaim to share.  
 The Norman now, in tones and words sedate,  
 Thus closed the council and that long debate:

"My faithful friends, my councillors brave and wise,  
 In time to come, through this great enterprise,  
 My gratitude sincere, profound is due,  
 To men so just, so firm in faith as you.  
 Lanfranc the wise, each view has now combined,  
 In his profound, his pious, lofty mind.

I will remind Duke Harold of his oath,  
 And if refused, despite his plighted faith,  
 My efforts still I truly will exert,  
 Him to convince and bloody war avert.  
 I then will claim, for so his promise stood,  
 A closer alliance with his Saxon blood.  
 This being done, and his assent withheld,  
 Arms I invoke, to war I am compelled."

Now at Evreux there dwelt of highest fame,  
 A noble knight and Bohun was his name ;  
 A valiant youth by William much esteemed,  
 And for that trust well fitted he was deemed.  
 Some younger nobles with Count Bohun went,  
 Well pleased to be on such great errand sent.  
 The preparations for the journey made,  
 The Norman Prince strict orders then conveyed.  
 Credentials full he also did bestow,  
 His trust to prove, his sov'reign rights to show.  
 To Bohun, too, these words immortal gave,  
 Dread war to rouse, but not a state to save :  
 " To the Duke Harold, this my message bear,  
 High greetings give him, and my words declare :  
 ' William Duke of the Normans, greets you, Sir,  
 And this the message which from him I bear :  
 That Prince reminds you (these his words, no more,)  
 Of that great oath which once to him you swore,  
 On holy relics by your word, your hand,  
 Before the nobles of the Norman land.' "

King Harold then at London held his court,  
 Where his great vassals had their chief resort.

The youthful Norman thither did repair  
 And to his presence claimed admission there.  
 Charged tho' he was with embassy so grave,  
 To him great Harold private audience gave.  
 The storm he saw too well to be deceived,  
 And hence alone, the messenger received.  
 So soon as Harold had enquiry made,  
 To him the knight in words of William said :

“ William, Duke of the Normans, greets you, Sir,  
 And this the message which from him I bear :  
 That Prince reminds you (these his words, no more,)  
 Of that great oath which once to him you swore,  
 On holy relics by your word, your hand,  
 Before the nobles of the Norman land.”

A pause ensued while o'er the Monarch's brow,  
 There came a cloud, a shade of passing woe.  
 He thoughtful then the Norman calmly eyed,  
 And briefly thus, in accents cold, replied :  
 “ 'Tis true that I an oath to William swore :  
 That fatal act perchance I may deplore.  
 But let that pass : reproaches now are vain,  
 Nor of my wrongs would I to thee complain.  
 What then I pledged did not to me belong :  
 Myself I might but not my country wrong.  
 The royal power was not mine to yield ;  
 In England's name that power I must shield.  
 Since that dark day of suffering and despair,  
 The pious Edward named me his sole heir.  
 This would be cause sufficient if alone,  
 To force me now to hold the English throne.

To William hence convey this my reply,  
The only one, now sanctioned from on high."

To all these Normans Harold then displayed  
Those court'sies high to royal envoys paid.  
In all his words, his actions they could trace  
A frank demeanor, and a princely grace.  
A royal banquet was prepared next day,  
With all the pomp which Kings could then display.  
In special honor these young knights were held,  
And from their minds all hostile thoughts dispelled.  
Two days elapsed, the envoy took his leave,  
And from the King did kind farewell receive.  
Count Bohun then proceeded on his way,  
And Harold's words to William did convey.  
The Duke received him with an anxious mind,  
With vague distrust and eagerness combined.  
" 'Tis true that I an oath to William swore :  
That fatal act perchance I may deplore.  
But let that pass : reproaches now are vain,  
Nor of my wrongs would I to thee complain.  
What then I pledged did not to me belong :  
Myself I might but not my people wrong.  
The royal power was not mine to yield ;  
In England's name that power I must shield.  
Since that dark day of suffering and despair,  
The pious Edward named me his sole heir.  
This would be cause sufficient if alone,  
To force me now to hold the English throne.  
To William hence convey this my reply,  
The only one now sanctioned from on high."



William was calm and naught in anger said ;  
 But thoughtful looked though comment none he made.  
 With clouded brow, with accent cold and grave,  
 A second message he to Bohun gave ;  
 To Harold likewise straight to be conveyed,  
 " To Harold now return, this errand bear—  
 To him alone these words of mine declare :  
 ' By Duke William I am sent once more,  
 To greet you, Sire, upon the English shore.  
 A secret message now to you I bring,  
 And in these words address you as a king :  
 " To me an oath you swore in solemn form ;  
 To that I hoped your acts would all conform.  
 But this no more : that hope's forever gone,  
 And you and I must henceforth stand alone.  
 It was not well in truth,—but be it so ;  
 I shall not here, nor would reproach you now.  
 One hope remains, one only now is left ;  
 Of that nor I, nor you, are yet bereft.  
 You promise made, such word no knight can break,  
 That my young daughter you to wife would take.  
 To her that pledge her father did announce.  
 Be true in this ; all else I then renounce.  
 May this avert the lowering storms of fate,  
 And heal deep wounds ere yet it prove too late." '

To England now Count Bohun sent again,—  
 Once more set forth upon the watery main.  
 Fierce winds arose and far the ocean swept,  
 And long at sea the wave-worn ship was kept.

By tempests tossed, long dreary days had passed,  
Ere they on shore in deep distress were cast.

Meantime at court great revelry was seen,  
To honor Harold and to greet his queen.  
Editha then became King Harold's bride,  
And on the throne sat by that monarch's side.  
She with fair check, soft eye and auburn hair,  
And stately beauty, age will ne'er impair,  
Seemed purer, lovelier 'neath the evening beam,  
Which shed its radiance on that splendid dream.  
Yet there was sadness on that queenlike brow,  
Prophetic shadow of some future woe,  
A veiled gloom, mysterious, undefined,  
That haunts her young, her o'er impassioned mind.  
What griefs lie hid in hearts unworn by years,  
And all unseen are watered by young tears!

Count Bohun zealous William to obey,  
The Monarch sought his message to convey.  
Received he was by Harold's high command  
With solemn state in council of the land.  
To cold enquiry there by Harold made,  
In timid tones and faltering then he said :

“ By Duke William I am sent once more,  
To greet you, Sire, upon the English shore.  
A secret message now to you I bring,  
And in these words address you as a king :  
' To me an oath you swore in solemn form :  
To this I hoped your acts would all conform,  
But this no more ; that hope's for ever gone,  
And you and I must henceforth stand alone.

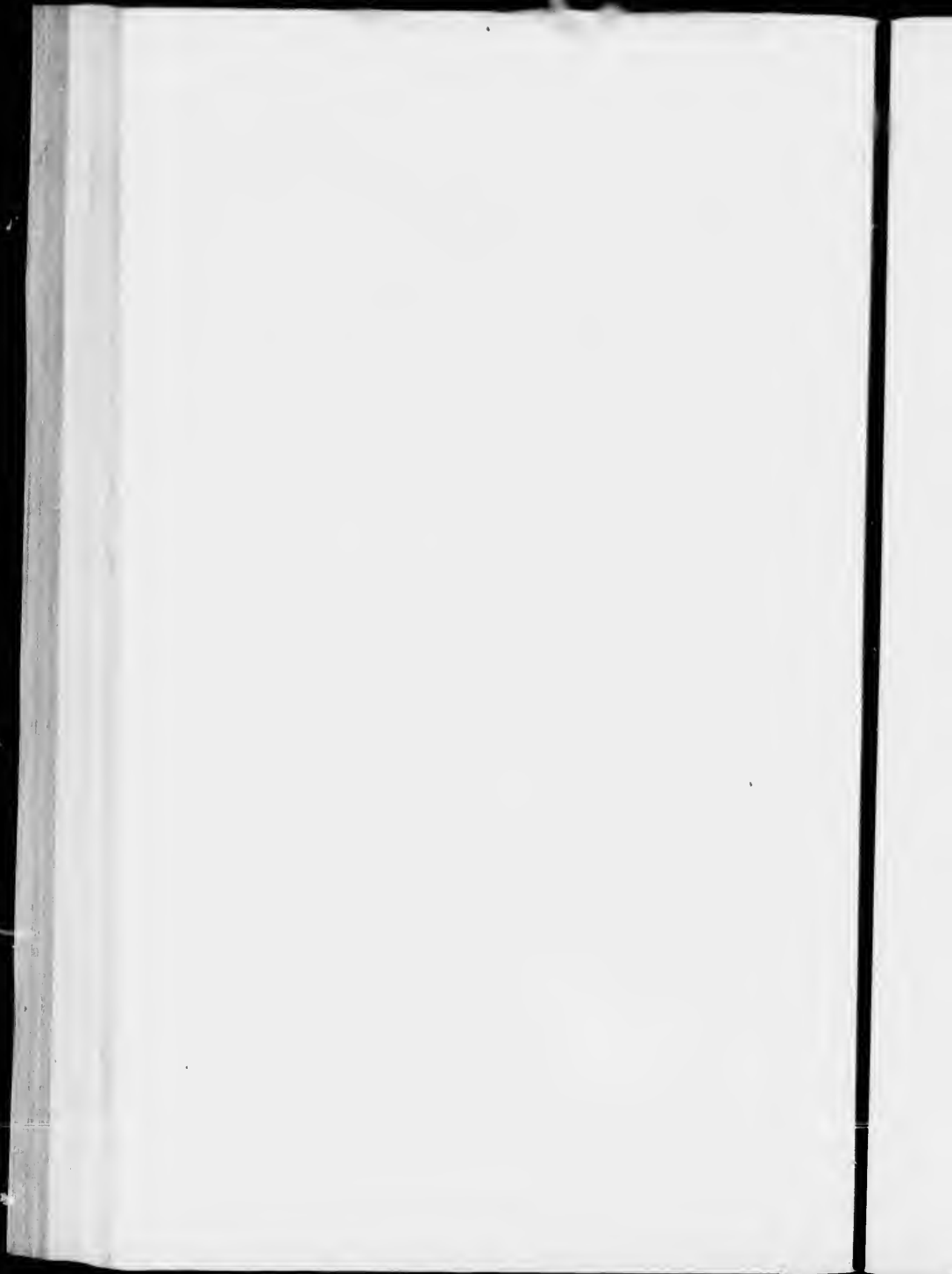
It was not well in truth,—but be it so ;  
 I shall not here, nor would reproach you now.  
 One hope remains, one only now is left ;  
 Of that nor I, nor you are yet bereft.  
 You promise made, such word no knight can break,<sup>4</sup>  
 That my young daughter you to wife would take.  
 To her that pledge her father did announce.  
 Be true in this ; all else I then renounce.  
 May this avert the lowering storms of fate,  
 And heal deep wounds ere yet it prove too late.' ”

To which the king with cold, rebukeful eye,  
 In tones impressive made this stern reply :  
 “ Give the Duke William these brief words from me :

His proffered prayer must still rejected be.  
 Inform him also, facts to you well known,  
 A Saxon queen now sits on England's throne.  
 She is our wife, a nation's hope and pride,  
 And o'er these realms she governs by our side.  
 Tell the proud Norman thus our fate is cast,  
 And of these errands, let this be the last.”

From England Bohun straightway now departs,  
 Seeks the great Duke, this stern reply imparts ;  
 And when the knight this final message brought,  
 And secret audience of his sov'reign sought,  
 The Prince in council with his nobles sat,  
 In anxious thought on great concerns of state,  
 And though for answer cold, nay harsh, prepared,  
 Before them all this message was declared.  
 There Bohun soon the eager silence broke,  
 And thus in Harold's haughty language spoke :

" Give the Duke William these brief words from me  
 His proffered prayer must still rejected be.  
 Inform him also, facts to you well known,  
 A Saxon queen now sits on England's throne.  
 She is our wife, a nation's hope and pride,  
 And o'er these realms she governs by our side.  
 Tell the proud Norman thus our fate is cast,  
 And of these errands, let this be the last."  
 On anxious ears these words portentous fell,  
 And, thus proclaimed, did their last hopes dispel.  
 The Duke incensed, with fierce, indignant oath,  
 Let loose the demon of long-boarded wrath.  
 His scowling brow and spirit raging high,  
 Seemed foes, and fate, and reason to defy.  
 His frame convulsed, clenched hand and flashing eye,  
 His stately mind, his proud, unyielding soul,  
 Once more had lost their high and stern control.  
 And then he paused and in deep thought alone,  
 These words he uttered in revengeful tone :  
 " Within one year, all I have asked I'll take,  
 And of that kingdom hunting-ground will make."  
 But calmer now his words and accents grew,  
 And soon that prince and nobles all withdrew.  
 Thus these proud sov'reigns, mighty men of war,  
 Verge to that conflict, now alas ! too near.  
 Prelude of woe ! dark times of conquest came,  
 A nation's doom and deeds of deathless fame.



## BOOK EIGHTH.

### ARGUMENT.

Fierce resentment of the Duke of Normandy.—His denunciation of Harold.—His proclamation to Europe and appeal to Rome.—Reflections on the fall of Paganism and the rise of the Papal Power.—The Embassy to the Pope.—The complaint laid before Pope Alexander the Second. Citation of Harold.—His refusal to appear before the supreme Pontiff at Rome.—Consistory at the Lateran.—Hildebrand. William's cause is brought before the Pope and Cardinals.—Their speeches and that of Hildebrand.—Angry debate and final judgment of the Holy See.—The envoys are charged with a Consecrated Banner and Ring to be delivered to the Duke of Normandy.—Excommunication launched against Harold.—Departure of the ambassadors, and their arrival at Rouen.—Joy of William, who finally resolves on the invasion of England.

WITH vengeful thoughts Duke William now inflamed,  
Harold's misdeeds to Normandy proclaimed ;  
Then, far as rumor in those times could reach,  
His censure harsh the Saxon did impeach ;  
As perjured Prince, usurper he was shown,  
While William's wrongs to Europe were made known :  
Thro' all the regions of the west were heard  
His loud complaint, his stern, indignant word.  
To sceptered kings this great appeal was made,  
And sated ambition all its ire betrayed ;  
But Rome's high Court he chiefly now addressed,  
And claimed from it these wrongs should be redressed,  
That sacred power had heathen creeds expelled,  
And o'er mankind a wide dominion held ;  
With holy Banner of the Faith unfurled,  
Supreme it ruled o'er all the Christian world :

Of States great arbiter it had become,  
And held them vassals to the See of Rome.

Of war and change a thousand years had fled,  
Since on the Cross the Great Redeemer bled.  
When He was sent to save our fallen race,  
Far o'er the Earth the Roman sway had place :  
Rome's civilization and her rule had spread,  
And in her chains proud Nations had been led ;  
Naught could the march of her imperial power  
Arrest, divert, in its o'erwhelming hour.  
Rome, long the sovereign, tyrant of mankind,  
Had every fate in her career combined :  
Invasion, conquest, freedom and renown,  
The Despot's wrath, then anarchy, decline ;  
Languor, convulsion, feverish hope, despair,  
In turns prevailed thro' mournful epochs there ;—  
Until her arms, laws, policy supreme,  
Had lost their vigor in that withering dream  
Of sensual joys, of luxury, repose  
Which left her victim to avenging woes.  
Rome's wisdom, strength, were verging to decay  
Beneath a cruel, all corrupting sway.  
Cold o'er that land of genius and of fame,  
With sullen gloom the brooding twilight came,  
And Error sat upon her midnight throne,  
Wielding her sceptre o'er a world undone,  
Till in the radiance of its morning light  
The sun of truth arose upon that night,  
Shining afar o'er eras of the past,  
By Pagan dreams and impious creeds o'ercast.

Before that beam upon the Empire shed,  
 The gods of Rome and heathen darkness fled.  
 Time passed away ; at length the Word had gained  
 A lasting triumph where the Cæsars reigned.  
 Oh ! Heaven descended, just and sacred power,  
 Earth's ark of hope thro' many an evil hour,  
 From Calvary, dark scene of guilt and woe,  
 Thy tidings spread, new teachings to bestow.  
 Immortal Truth ! the truth revealed of God,  
 Erected shrines where fierce barbarians trod,  
 Who, awed, subdued, lent each a listening ear,  
 And midst Rome's ruins shed a softening tear.  
 When vengeance nursed in many a distant clime,  
 O'erturned that fabric built by war and crime ;—  
 When countless hordes from regions of the North,  
 With arms and fury to their work came forth,  
 Spreading dismay thro' all the Roman world,  
 And to the dust that proud dominion hurled :—  
 Tho' drunk with carnage, dyed with blood of foes,  
 They learn, they weep o'er the Redeemer's woes ;—  
 Till living saints, and Christian truth no more  
 The persecutions of the heathen bore.  
 After this reign of violence and wrong,  
 As ice in spring, cold northern shores along,  
 Melts 'neath the splendour of the vernal beams,  
 And to the Ocean floats upon the streams,  
 So superstition and the creeds of old,  
 Which on men's minds had such pernicious hold,  
 Dissolved beneath that pure and living ray  
 And to time's ocean floated far away.



A brighter sun, Earth's verdure will renew,  
 And God's great truths will fall like evening dew  
 Upon the sad and wearied souls of men,  
 Darkened by old and fatal errors then.  
 After long centuries had rolled away,  
 The Papal rule had grown to sovereign sway  
 O'er mighty nations, monarchs of renown,  
 Who owned obedience to the Triple Crown.  
 And now the Church, by missions and decrees,  
 The faith had borne to Earth's remoter seas;—  
 A holy creed, to mankind widely taught,  
 The great atonement by Christ's sufferings bought.  
 The soul enslaved had found a full release  
 Thro' the pure teachings of the Prince of Peace :—  
 High o'er the prostrate idols of the past  
 That Power divine was thus enthroned at last :—  
 And Rome, the place of her dominion stood,  
 Tho' often there had flowed the martyr's blood.  
 'Twas at this time Pope Alexander reigned  
 As sovereign Pontiff, Papal sway maintained.  
 With deep design and with well known intent,  
 To him by William embassies were sent.  
 First from the Vatican redress to claim  
 For wrongs far bruited by the breath of fame.  
 Robert, a priest of Jumièges went there—  
 And thither also did Lanfranc repair.  
 Of William's claims, and how he was betrayed,  
 They to the Pope a full disclosure made.  
 For that high purpose they to Rome had gone,  
 And great the zeal by both these churchmen shown.

The Pontiff's ear, securely they had gained,  
 And William's plans had secretly explained :  
 For when the council of the Prince was o'er,  
 And ere Count Bohun reached the English shore,  
 Long ere reply of Harold could be sent  
 With first announcement of his firm intent,  
 To hold the Crown thro' weal-alike and woe,  
 In stern defiance of his wary foe,  
 These men, the wisest of the Norman land,  
 In secret left by William's wish, command,  
 But when full answer great King Harold made  
 And his resolve so promptly had conveyed,  
 Gilbert of Liseux, churchman of renown,  
 To Rome was sent to claim the English Crown.  
 He for the task, for such great suit prepared,  
 As envoy thither in quick haste repaired ;  
 And to the Pontiff, in supreme conclave,  
 A full report of Harold's answer gave.  
 All that intrigue, that eloquence could do,  
 Was urged, was argued oftentimes anew ;  
 And from that Pontiff, long for justice famed,  
 Against the Saxon stern decree was claimed.

First it was said, that many a year before,  
 The youthful Alfred, on the English shore,  
 Had fallen victim to a murderous hand,  
 By Godwin prompted, or by his command ;  
 That Harold's father on a festive day,  
 The youthful Prince most foully did betray.  
 Then to the Pope it further was declared,  
 That Harold had by treacherous act prepared

Th' unjust discharge from Canterbury's See,  
Of Norman Robert, destined still to be  
Of Harold's race, the unforgiving foe,  
Who ever sought that Prince's overthrow.  
This famous churchman was Duke William's friend,  
And to his cause did all his influence lend.  
High in the Church shone this great prelate's name,  
And much did Rome his harsh dismissal blame.  
Prince Harold's share in this injustice done,  
As a great crime, had to the Pontiff gone.  
Added to these, the Norman did lay claim  
To England's throne in Edward's royal name,  
Both as a kinsman of the King deceased,  
And by words spoken e'er his exile ceased,  
And by decree upon his bed of death,  
Tho' faintly uttered with his dying breath.  
As vile usurper, Harold thus appeared,  
By every law to be denounced, abhorred.  
As such he boldly seized the English Crown  
Despite the rights he long, too well had known.  
These high and solemn accusations urged  
Were all in one of greater import merged ;  
The horrid crime of sacrilege was laid,  
Which all the Saxon's guilty mind betrayed ;  
And here his oath at Bayeux was assigned,  
And scorn of relics with that vow combined.  
The violation of that oath was shown  
When he usurped the great Confessor's throne.  
And now a perjured, recreant Prince he stood,  
With guilty soul, and stained with kinsman's blood.

Before the Pontiff artfully were laid  
 These graver charges, and harsh comments made.  
 And to the Pope, by Lanfranc's friendly zeal  
 Was now preferred this last and high appeal,  
 That the usurper might be cited there  
 And for his crimes a full defence prepare.  
 And he, by William, further was implored,  
 Should Harold fail strict justice to afford :—  
 Should he refuse to lay the sceptre down  
 And yield possession of the English Crown,  
 That excommunication should against him run  
 And he and his forever be undone ;  
 That England, then, by his supreme decree,  
 Should be declared to an invasion free,  
 The prey, the prize of William's warlike hand,  
 Should he prove victor o'er that famous land ;  
 That he would hold that Kingdom of the Pope,  
 And aid him ever with his foes to cope.  
 He claimed a blessing on his holy cause,  
 Such as would gain all righteous men's applause.  
 'Twas thus King Harold, Lord of nations free,  
 They sought to bring before the Holy See,  
 And make him there his honor, crown defend,  
 And with his own a nation's cause to blend.  
 Each charge was made, in words precise and clear ;  
 To answer them the Saxon must appear.  
 Forthwith an envoy to the monarch sent,  
 Set forth the Pontiff's mild but grave intent ;  
 But vainly did the Pope his presence claim,  
 Such act will ne'er dishonor his great name ;

In language firm, but reverent, he declared,  
 Tho' for obedience to just law prepared,  
 Yet, as the Ruler of a sovereign land  
 He would obey no foreign Prince, command.  
 These brief, stern words concisely did convey  
 To Rome's high Court the patriot King's reply.  
 "Tell the Pontiff, to him this message bear,  
 "That with respect his warning voice I hear ;  
 "His solemn charge with reverence I have heard,  
 "And listen humbly to his sacred word ;  
 "Religious censures on my head may fall,  
 "And as a Christian I will bear them all.  
 "What I in person may have done that's wrong  
 "To him to punish rightly doth belong ;  
 "Let one be sent who this great cause may try,  
 "And with his order promptly I'll comply ;  
 "But England's monarch ne'er by just decree, }  
 "For public crimes, to Rome can cited be, }  
 "But must be judged in councils of the free. }  
 "My rights as Sovereign I shall never yield,  
 "My own dishonour or misdeeds to shield.  
 "This my last word, and this my firm resolve,  
 "Let him condemn as he may now absolve."

Harold's reply thus promptly having learned,  
 To Rome the envoy forthwith had returned ;  
 And to the Pope this answer now conveyed,  
 Had on the Pontiff deep impression made.  
 At Rome there dwelt, and then of rising fame,  
 A holy man and Hildebrand by name,  
 In those far times, a churchman of renown  
 And firm supporter of the Triple Crown ;

Renowned for zeal, well known, revered at Rome ;  
 From Cluny's Halls that learned priest had come ;  
 He soon great chancellor of the church was made,  
 And in that trust the loftiest aims displayed.  
 Of daring soul and intellect profound,  
 His bold reforms by some were thought unsound.  
 To stately influence Hildebrand had grown,  
 And swayed the Church by maxims yet unknown ;—  
 To bear her rule o'er every kingly power,  
 Each thought engaged, employed each thoughtful hour.  
 When Rome's last Pontiff died, in gloomy day,  
 The present Pope he raised to sovereign sway ;  
 And well sustained, despite imperial wrath,  
 And safely bore thro' all his troubled path.  
 In after times, great Hildebrand arose  
 To rule supreme, and baffled still his foes ;—  
 The faithful governed with despotic sway,  
 And raised religion to a brighter day.  
 With schism, simony, and darker crimes,  
 Long he contended in those barbarous times ;  
 But patient still, his era had not come  
 With awe to fill the Christian world and Rome.  
 In solemn council, grave with public care,  
 The famous suit of William then to hear,  
 The Pontiff sat, with cardinals around,  
 Advice to give, as each in turn was bound.  
 The Lords of thought, elite of all mankind,  
 Renowned for learning and true zeal combined :  
 With air of gods, majestic and serene,  
 Men fit to sway earth's sceptres they had been.

At Lateran that consistory was held,  
 And on that day, Rome's splendour was upheld ;  
 Lanfranc and Robert, with Guilbert were there,  
 Tho' in debate these envoys could not share.  
 But foremost still with aspect grave and cold,  
 Stern Hildebrand did place of honor hold.  
 The light of mind shone from that cloudless eye,  
 Calm rays of genius which can never die,  
 Around the hall, priests hurried to and fro,  
 Thro' doors and corridors, above, below.  
 Till solemn silence in the assembly reigned  
 And each intent, expectant look maintained.  
 The Sovereign Pontiff, from his throne of state,  
 In these brief words invites the high debate :  
 " Reverend Lords and holy brethren here,  
 " Harold, you know, was cited to appear  
 " And answer charges by Duke William made,  
 " On which our judgment hath been long delayed,  
 " In this high court, of Christendom the head,  
 " Harold hath failed in his defence to plead ;  
 " And by his answer to our summons given,  
 " Defies the power which comes to us from heaven ;  
 " He, nor admits, nor doth deny those crimes,  
 " So widely known, deplored in Christian times ;  
 " As King of England, he maintains he's free  
 " From all allegiance to the Holy See ;  
 " Denying firmly our unquestioned right  
 " To sway that Kingdom by vicegerent might ;  
 " His rude reply resistance doth disclose,  
 " And to you now misdeeds I should expose :

" He, still perverse, sustained by rebel pride,  
 " Hath all our power and right alike defied ;  
 " Therefore, by us, he must be justly judged,  
 " To this our Church and God's command are pledged.  
 " Of Harold's errors you are all aware,  
 " You will by council in our judgment share."

Tancredi then, a man of stately mien,  
 Bespoke a hearing in that solemn scene,  
 With speech concise, with rapid thought expressed,  
 He in few words, the Pontiff thus addressed :

" Of God the great Vicegerent now on earth,  
 " Here I would speak brief words of earnest truth.  
 " Of my compeers, some now with gifted speech,  
 " May me approve, or will my views impeach ;  
 " My heart, my reason dictates what I say,  
 " Tho' accents cold my meaning may convey :  
 " Much I would urge, since I your counsel share,  
 " Duke William's suit upon your sacred care.  
 " A valiant Prince, of famed and great command,  
 " Beloved of God, renowned in many a land.  
 " A mighty race these Normans e'er have been,  
 " And aid have lent thro' many a trying scene ;  
 " Their arms, devotion, valor, still may be  
 " Of signal service to the Holy See.  
 " Our sacred Church, whate'er their deeds may show,  
 " They still adore as work of God below.  
 " Against the heathen, heretics, their sword  
 " Speak more directly than your solemn word ;  
 " And other motives should your judgment sway,  
 " Why your decree stern censure should convey,



"Should you refuse, in these disastrous times,  
 "To punish Harold's high and many crimes,  
 "Such great example others will betray  
 "To deeds more wrongful on some later day ;  
 "And so relaxing mankind may defy  
 "Your ancient rule however pure and high ;  
 "Foul sacrilege should no exemption claim,  
 "Tho' great may be the proud offender's name.  
 "Perjury, murder, tho' from kings they come,  
 "Should not escape their just and public doom.  
 "You should o'er all exert a stern control,  
 "To curb man's reason and his pride of soul.  
 "These crimes alone full punishment demand  
 "From your chastizing, apostolic hand ;  
 "And as the Norman hath allegiance shown,  
 "Appealing still unto your voice and throne,  
 "To his great cause, I would our sanction give,  
 "By benediction which good deeds receive ;  
 "I would proclaim him soldier of the Lord,  
 "And England his, if conquered by his sword.  
 "I'd punish Harold ; he your summons slights,  
 "By interdiction from all sacred rights."

This bold advice attracted notice there,  
 And many seemed this counsel then to share,  
 Then next Visconti, one of eye serene,  
 Of thoughtful brow, of grave and reverend mien,  
 The Sovereign Father of the Faithful spoke,  
 And thus the silence of the conclave broke :

"Most Holy Chief, and ye who guide the Church,  
 "Of truth of justice, ever still in search,

“ The duty’s mine, and also of you all,  
“ Advice to give, our solemn thoughts recall  
“ To matters grave, involved in this debate,  
“ And our conviction freely here to state.  
“ For one I am, must ever be, opposed  
“ To schemes of conquest which are now proposed ;  
“ I give no sanction, none will e’er extend  
“ To wars, to crusades which directly tend  
“ To the subversion of a Christian race,  
“ Who live in hopes of God’s peculiar grace.  
“ No wisdom, justice, in such plan I find,  
“ Nor aught which can, or should our counsel bind.  
“ ’Tis said that William’s heir to England’s throne,  
“ And justly claims her Sceptre for his own ;  
“ That Harold hath, by open fraud and force,  
“ Usurped and followed still his perjured course.  
“ But in such cause, ’tis not our part to share ;  
“ When Princes strive, let other men beware.  
“ To me it seems our duty still should be  
“ From strife of kings to keep our counsels free.  
“ On all the crimes now laid to Harold’s charge,  
“ With dubious speech I will not now enlarge ;  
“ Had your high summons to that monarch gone,  
“ To answer these and answer these alone,  
“ Assured I am, that promptly he’d obey,  
“ And his great name defend upon this day.  
“ To judge this sacrilege, a legate send,  
“ If such there be, let Harold it defend.  
“ This righteous course hath oft been tried before,  
“ And great the fruits in cause of right it bore.

" If Harold's guilty of a broken vow,  
 " Let deep dishonour stamp his kingly brow.  
 " Convinced I am that he will make defence  
 " Without evasion, or a false pretence.  
 " To me, in truth, it seems that oath was given  
 " Without a sanction from the will of Heaven.  
 " Was there coercion, fraud, perchance surprise ?  
 " Was their deception, practise of disguise ?  
 " If this be so, whose the dishonoured name ?  
 " Should we the Saxon for such action blame ?  
 " These men I know, and much I do mistrust  
 " This charge on Harold by the Norman thrust.  
 " Be firm, be just, and Harold will appear ;  
 " But ere we judge, the Saxon we must hear.  
 " To you he promptly a defence will send,  
 " And his renown from sacrilege defend.  
 " My counsel is : your sanction still withhold  
 " From Norman schemes, too crafty and too bold."

A murmur of approval then went round,  
 And many there concurring too were found.  
 All William's friends, save Hildebrand, seem'd awed,  
 And silence kept, while others would applaud.  
 Urbano then, a holy man, arose,  
 And briefly thus did his advice propose :  
 " Most Holy Pontiff, and you fathers here,  
 " To you my counsel I would now declare :  
 " First and chiefly I denounce the course  
 " Which some suggest, the arm and thought of force.  
 " Pepin and Charlemagne did lend their aid  
 " To Holy Church, and in her cause displayed

- " The glory, influence of immortal names,  
 " And their high deeds our gratitude proclaims.  
 " These potent monarchs, by God's great design,  
 " Did vast dominion to your rule assign ;  
 " These you should sway with an impartial hand,  
 " As Sovereign Prince, by Heaven's just command.  
 " O'er minor states, which have true fealty sworn,  
 " Parental rule you wisely still have borne ;  
 " But warlike nations freedom will maintain,  
 " And their subjection you will claim in vain.  
 " God's holy word, the Church's high decree  
 " Alone should guide us, and our law should be.  
 " On the fierce passions of our fallen race,  
 " Our duty is a strong restraint to place ;  
 " To watch, admonish, punish is your right,  
 " By sacred means, but not by arm of might.  
 " By love, by fear of God's eternal wrath,  
 " Teach wicked men to tread the better path.  
 " On foreign contests, always fraught with woe,  
 " My counsel is no sanction to bestow :  
 " As mediator you may interpose,  
 " But not to aid or stimulate great foes.  
 " If Harold hath been guilty of a crime,  
 " Let him be censured, punished in due time.  
 " If he of sacrilege hath guilty been,  
 " Let no evasion the offender screen :  
 " Penance impose, but let not your decree  
 " Assert dominion o'er a nation free.  
 " The great disorders which afflict our times  
 " Would by such course all terminate in crimes ;

" No sacred haven would exist below  
 " For feeble sufferers in an age of woe ;  
 " No refuge then, asylum would remain,  
 " Or power divine, great evils to restrain ;  
 " Your holy name, your mission from above,  
 " Would be defiled, no help to men would prove. '

Next from his seat, grave Hildebrand arose,  
 And calmly then did his high thoughts disclose :  
 His was the modest mien, the thoughtful eye,  
 The mind long taught on reason to rely :  
 Serene, yet earnest, firm in each resolve,  
 And skilful too vast projects to evolve ;  
 A master spirit, politic, sublime,  
 With soul deep mourning o'er an age of crime ;  
 A pure apostle of a holy creed,  
 And seeking still the Christian world to lead  
 Thro' better paths ; tho' arms and warlike might,  
 Which plunged in woe that long midœval night,  
 He deemed were means, one means at least to gain  
 A firm dominion o'er the minds of men.

With studied words he first the silence broke,  
 And thus with deep and holy fervor spoke :

" Father revered, of Christendom the Lord,  
 " Guardian supreme of God's eternal word,  
 " From hence, thro' you a pure and heavenly light  
 " Illumes the nations which have dwelt in night.  
 " Long since hath truth dawn'd on a darkened world,  
 " And glows where'er Christ's banner is unfurled.  
 " Your sacred throne, our holy Church doth stand,  
 " To guard to guide, reform each Christian land.

- " Before that throne, mine now the lowliest name,  
 " Obscure abroad, least known to earthly fame,  
 " To you all humbly in this great conclave,  
 " Doth counsel give on matters high and grave :  
 " Should error mingle with advice thus given,  
 " 'Twill be unsanctioned by the voice of Heaven.  
 " Long, sad, eventful times have gone,  
 " Since great St. Peter won the Martyr's Crown,  
 " To him was given to enthrone a power  
 " To rule mankind until their latest hour,  
 " A sway which should perdition's works assail,  
 " And over which untruth should not prevail.  
 " This trust is yours, this power you uphold  
 " Against the systems and the creeds of old.  
 " The hope of realms beneath your sacred sway,  
 " The Church's mission is to watch, to pray,  
 " Princes and monarchs, nations to control,  
 " And teach, instruct, and purify the soul,  
 " To bind, release, absolve, and still to guide,  
 " To raise men's thoughts while you abate their pride ;  
 " Supreme o'er all, o'er every power below,  
 " To God, to you the human mind should bow.  
 " By Him to you was holy sanction given  
 " To rule our race as delegate of Heaven.  
 " To spread the faith, with hope of better times,  
 " And Christian worship to remotest climes.  
 " You th' apostle, guardian of mankind,  
 " A prompt obedience in the world should find :  
 " It were too long, perchance, for me to search  
 " The sacred records of our holy Church ;

“ But these would show, our faltering minds would teach  
“ How wise each end which we have sought to reach.  
“ Our duty’s plain, is clear to every mind,  
“ Nations to sway both singly and combined.  
“ Your watchful eye should Christian lands survey,  
“ Detecting perils still upon their way :  
“ Recalling those your favor may deserve,  
“ And those who fail your mandates to observe.  
“ Before I enter on this brief review,  
“ In grief I’d speak some words, alas ! too true.  
“ Still great reforms our holy Church requires,  
“ And much distrust the priesthood now inspires.  
“ In every land disorder, crime prevails,  
“ And deeds of wrath, your Holiness bewails,  
“ While schism spreads her foul and fetid wings,  
“ And disrepute upon religion brings ;  
“ Appalling vices ’mong the Clergy reign,  
“ And these abuses Prelates, too, sustain.  
“ It is a scandal to our holy creed  
“ To see the lives our priests and bishops lead.  
“ To stem the evils which profusely flow,  
“ Or pluck the weeds which thus luxuriant grow :  
“ To you this power intact, and all supreme,  
“ Must strengthened be and purified I deem ;  
“ No diminution of this power should be,  
“ Nor should corruption pass from censure free.  
“ Christ’s pure religion to your trust assigned,  
“ All free must be from stain of every kind,  
“ Unless proud monarchs, nations you control,  
“ How can you cure this leprosy of soul ?

" The Greeks have gone, nor can they more molest  
 " Our holy Church, which doth eternal rest.  
 " Constantinople can no longer sway  
 " Religious thought, or sacred truths betray ;  
 " A mightier power, in the West enthroned,  
 " Hath the Apostate and his creed disowned.  
 " Thro' Southern Italy we now may trace  
 " The steady progress of the Norman race ;  
 " Sicily they rule, and that immortal land  
 " To glory springs beneath their sway, command.  
 " Their foes subdued, their conquering arms prevail ;  
 " To them we look and their allegiance hail.  
 " These children of the Church have fealty sworn,  
 " And in her cause victorious arms have borne.  
 " My feeble words cannot in truth convey  
 " The wisdom, valour which their acts display.  
 " In proper time to these I shall advert,  
 " But pause not here their merits to assert.  
 " The Lombards sink beneath your sovereign sway  
 " And their resistance soon must pass away ;  
 " Milan must yield, and in the course of time  
 " Will cease to be a scene of war and crime ;  
 " The fierce dissensions which subvert, destroy  
 " Our sacred union will be turned to joy :  
 " And with the blessing of God's word and grace,  
 " Your holy sceptre will the sword replace.  
 " No rude revolt Spain, Africa will make,  
 " And still from you the law supreme must take.  
 " Then further north proud states our thoughts must claim,  
 " Nations renown'd and great in warlike fame.



" Grave, wild disorders in those kingdoms reign,  
 " And barbarous relics of rude times remain.  
 " The German monarchs rule that famous land,  
 " But 'gainst the Church oft raise rebellious hand.  
 " With that great power, you painfully contend,  
 " And to the Altar still these feuds extend.  
 " These Princes speak in far too bold a tone,  
 " And claim too loudly to control your throne :  
 " By bishops, priests, vast sums are freely paid  
 " All there is venal and high trusts betrayed.  
 " This foul abuse in France we know prevails,  
 " And stern remonstrance nothing yet avails.  
 " There the lost monarch is immersed in vice,  
 " And every license is secured by price.  
 " Your sacred rule is much required there,  
 " That distant Church demands your watchful care.  
 " On Northern shores, fierce nations more remote,  
 " Into your fold reluctantly are brought.  
 " Their haughty rulers need more stern control,  
 " E'er they can learn the interests of the soul.  
 " Comes England next, a nation fierce and rude,  
 " Nor to your rule completely yet subdued.  
 " Your high decrees that island should obey,  
 " And place its crown beneath your righteous sway.  
 " That distant land should feel your sovereign power,  
 " Or 'twill revolt at some too near an hour.  
 " Their stubborn minds will fierce resistance make,  
 " Nor fail, perchance, some other creed to take :  
 " Britons, Saxons, and the Danes unite,  
 " In bold defiance of your sacred right.

" From Canterbury, Robert was expelled,  
 " And haughty Stigand in his place installed ;  
 " When they have learned and know that they are free,  
 " They will denounce, defy the Holy See ;  
 " A bad example in these troubled times,  
 " And one inviting to great public crimes.  
 " The Norman Princes, great in martial fame,  
 " Our earnest care and high approval claim ;  
 " Of Christian nations, which your rule admit,  
 " For warlike deeds the Normans seem most fit.  
 " In France and Italy their rising power  
 " Defers to you their Sovereign at this hour ;  
 " To you they still their veteran armies lend  
 " To aid the right, and your high throne defend.  
 " Thus, it appears, supremely o'er the whole,  
 " All earthly kingdoms your's is to control ;  
 " The Church to purify and bless mankind,  
 " Religion, law, and order stand combined.  
 " These rights you must maintain, these truths enforce,  
 " By holy means and by sagacious course.  
 " At length I come to Harold's urgent case,  
 " And his misdeeds would briefly here retrace  
 " Before your throne, now cited to appear,  
 " His famous name from obloquy to clear,  
 " He hath refused, your summons hath defied ;  
 " So he and England your commands deride.  
 " To you Duke William his appeal hath made,  
 " And to your throne submission full displayed.  
 " Thus he implores grave sanction at your hand,  
 " Ere he makes war upon a Christian land.

" This loyal homage from so great a Prince,  
 " Doth highest reverence for your rule evince ;  
 " This deep devotion surely will increase  
 " Thro' warlike perils as in times of peace,  
 " Success will follow where he leads his hosts,  
 " And guard his standards on the English coasts ;  
 " Sustained with prayers, with blessings on his head,  
 " His sovereign sway o'er England soon will spread ;  
 " He'll hold his conquest as the gift of Rome  
 " And more devoted to your throne become.  
 " Take a wise course, judge what his rights should claim,  
 " And thus enlist that Prince of mighty fame.  
 " The Saxons, Danes, your strong control require,  
 " Ere with God's grace you can their souls inspire ;  
 " This to effect, their pride should be subdued  
 " By arms, by men religious but less rude.  
 " 'Tis by such means and by such means alone,  
 " That land will e'er be subject to your Crown.  
 " Far in the van, the armies of the Lord  
 " Your sway will bear with his eternal word.  
 " 'Tis also said, and so we must believe,  
 " That pious Edward, whom we justly grieve,  
 " Duke William named successor to his throne,  
 " Tho' his last words were publicly unknown.  
 " The Saxon Prince, tho' this decree he knew,  
 " Around his standards fierce retainers drew ;  
 " And, by intrigue, despite the Norman's claim,  
 " Usurped the throne to his eternal shame ;  
 " And to succeed in his accursèd cause  
 " Hath broken, spurned divine and human laws.

" It were not well, tho' men in peace should live,  
 " To such misdeeds your sanction you should give ;  
 " Then Harold's crimes doth punishment demand,  
 " And stern rebuke from your most sacred hand.  
 " An oath was sworn on relics, as we know  
 " By him long since a violated vow.  
 " Had absolution been by him required,  
 " He might, perchance, have had the wish desired ;  
 " But he refusing you our chief to greet,  
 " Proud, contumacious, his reward should meet.  
 " When summon'd here, thus guilty, to explain,  
 " Your order calls the Saxon Prince in vain ;  
 " This bold defiance of God's sacred law,  
 " Grave disrespect upon the church may draw ;  
 " If you still seek to sway that distant land,  
 " Pass not those deeds without a reprimand.  
 " These acts of Harold in your sovereign court,  
 " Full condemnation must from all extort ;  
 " Since to your judgment this appeal is made,  
 " Your high decree, your power should be obeyed.  
 " Should you permit this sacrilege to pass  
 " Unpunished now, then say adieu, alas !  
 " To your just influence o'er flagitious times,  
 " Men's hearts to rule, or to abate their crimes.  
 " These are the reasons why I now advise  
 " Your sacred blessing on this enterprise ;  
 " To bless the standard of the Norman Duke  
 " And Harold humble by some dread rebuke.  
 " By sacred Bull your holy wrath suspend  
 " O'er the usurper and the Saxon land.

" If disobedience he doth still maintain,  
 " Nor seek forgiveness from your hand to gain,  
 " And William's claim in arms he doth oppose,  
 " Be he accursed, then punished by his foes ;  
 " And so beneath the Norman's mighty sway  
 " That land will yet behold a brighter day."

Silence ensued : then some the speaker praised,  
 While with keen eye some on the Pontiff gazed.  
 At length Bernardo the deep silence broke,  
 And thus with mild but earnest accents spoke :

" Most reverend Lord, great chief of Christian lands,  
 " Advice you seek and counsel at our hands ;  
 " Mine I will give despite the lofty tone  
 " Which marks the words of Hildebrand alone ;  
 " Tho' I admire much he so well hath said,  
 " But more the skill in his discourse displayed,  
 " Altho' high merit he for this may claim,  
 " Some views of his I openly must blame.  
 " Whatever Harold's faults, his crimes may be,  
 " Tho' he refuse to offer here his plea,  
 " Some course more fitting surely may be found,  
 " Than that which now Duke William's friends propound.  
 " To me it seems a wild, unholy scheme,  
 " And one deserving our decisive blame,  
 " Of Christian nations to arouse the wrath,  
 " To point a victim in a conqueror's path ;  
 " To urge the Norman to the English coasts,  
 " And cheer the march of the destroyer's hosts ;  
 " To preach crusades against a Christian land,  
 " And sanction slaughter by so great command.

" England is true, yes true to our great faith  
 " And long hath lived in light of sacred truth,  
 " And, being such, I stand exempt from blame,  
 " Altho' her King your pardon still must claim.  
 " Harold may suffer for such great misdeed,  
 " But for his acts let not the nation bleed ;  
 " On him you should some stern reproof pronounce,  
 " And, if 'tis just, a punishment denounce ;  
 " But be it not proclaimed by voice of man  
 " That you approve this dark and cruel plan."

Him many followed, and declared with force  
 Against great Hildebrand's unholy course.  
 In that council, that solemn, high conclave,  
 Harsh words broke forth in censure deep and grave.  
 Of Hildebrand some spoke with cold disdain ;  
 Some gave expression to a sense of pain,  
 That one so learned, sincere and so devout,  
 Should urge a crusade with such horror fraught.  
 To spread obedience to God's holy word,  
 Such bloody projects ne'er before were heard ;  
 And one there was, still bolder than the rest,  
 Who indignation loudly there expressed :  
 Proclaimed such doctrine was a foul disgrace  
 To all who urged it in that holy place.  
 He mourn'd that high among them proudly stood  
 A man who preached the waste of Christian blood.  
 To such invectives he no answer made,  
 Nor e'en emotion at these words betrayed ;  
 Tho' of that council many uttered blame,  
 Yet all knew well the influence of his name.

The Sovereign Prince, in look and word of state,  
 Soon after closed that high and long debate ;  
 And all await, with deep and anxious care,  
 The solemn judgment which next morn would bear :  
 Immortal scene, replete with future fate,  
 Whence great events thro' coming time would date.  
 After a night of brief and wan repose,  
 The Holy Father from his couch arose.  
 To the great council later he repaired,  
 Where holy men, who had his counsel shared,  
 Assembled were the sacred throne around,  
 To hear the Pontiff his decree propound,  
 A sacred stillness reigned in that vast hall,  
 And expectation filled the hearts of all.

In the high thoughts by Hildebrand announced,  
 His judgment then was solemnly pronounced :  
 That Harold now had forfeited all claim  
 To England's throne, and to the Christian name.  
 King Edward's will, the Saxon's broken vow,  
 Were both commented and adjudged on now.  
 That he permission would to William send  
 To conquer England and her throne ascend ;  
 A sacred banner, blest with holy prayer,  
 To William's envoy was entrusted there ;  
 Likewise a ring, within which was enclosed  
 A relic taken whence it long reposed,  
 Of that Apostle who had raised that power,  
 To sway, to triumph till time's latest hour.  
 Should he not yield, it further was announced,  
 Stern excommunication was to be pronounced.

To that effect a sacred Bull was given  
Which o'er his head held forth the wrath of Heaven.  
To William's envoys, with this sanction grave,  
These sacred emblems of the Pope they gave ;  
Few days elapsed, ere Rouen they regained,  
Elate with all their mission had attained ;  
The Norman Prince absorbed in anxious thought  
O'er all the schemes his hate, his dreams had wrought,  
His envoys welcomed with exulting soul  
And words of hope he sought not to control ;  
He kissed those emblems of a feudal right,  
O'er future conquests won by warlike might.  
Approved by God and by religion blest,  
His vast ambition all its fire possest.  
This final judgment of the Pope went forth  
To all the known, the Christian lands of earth.  
Sentence of wrath which shook the western world,  
And soon the banner of the church unfurled,  
O'er warlike chivalry of many a land,  
And brought stern warriors 'neath that dread command ;  
To wreak deep woes of desolating years  
On generations bowed with chains and tears.



