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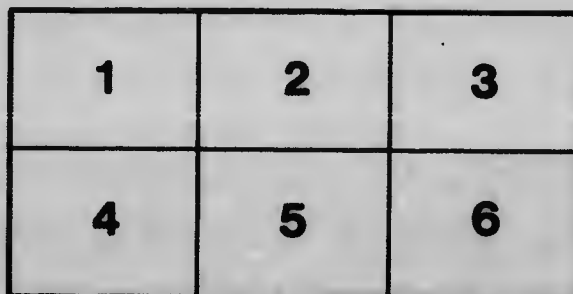
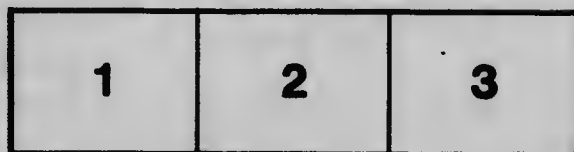
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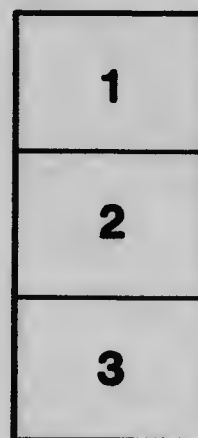
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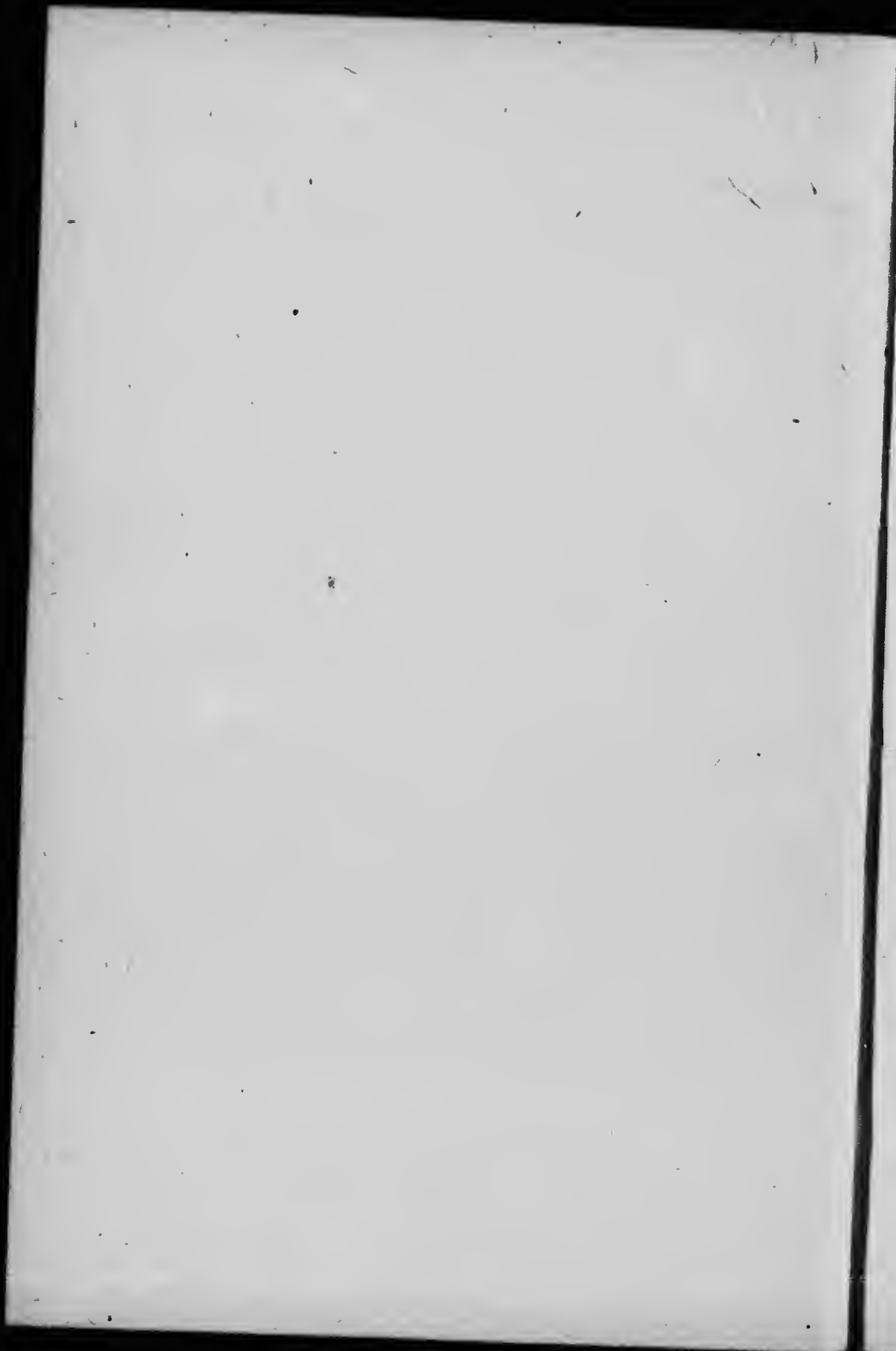
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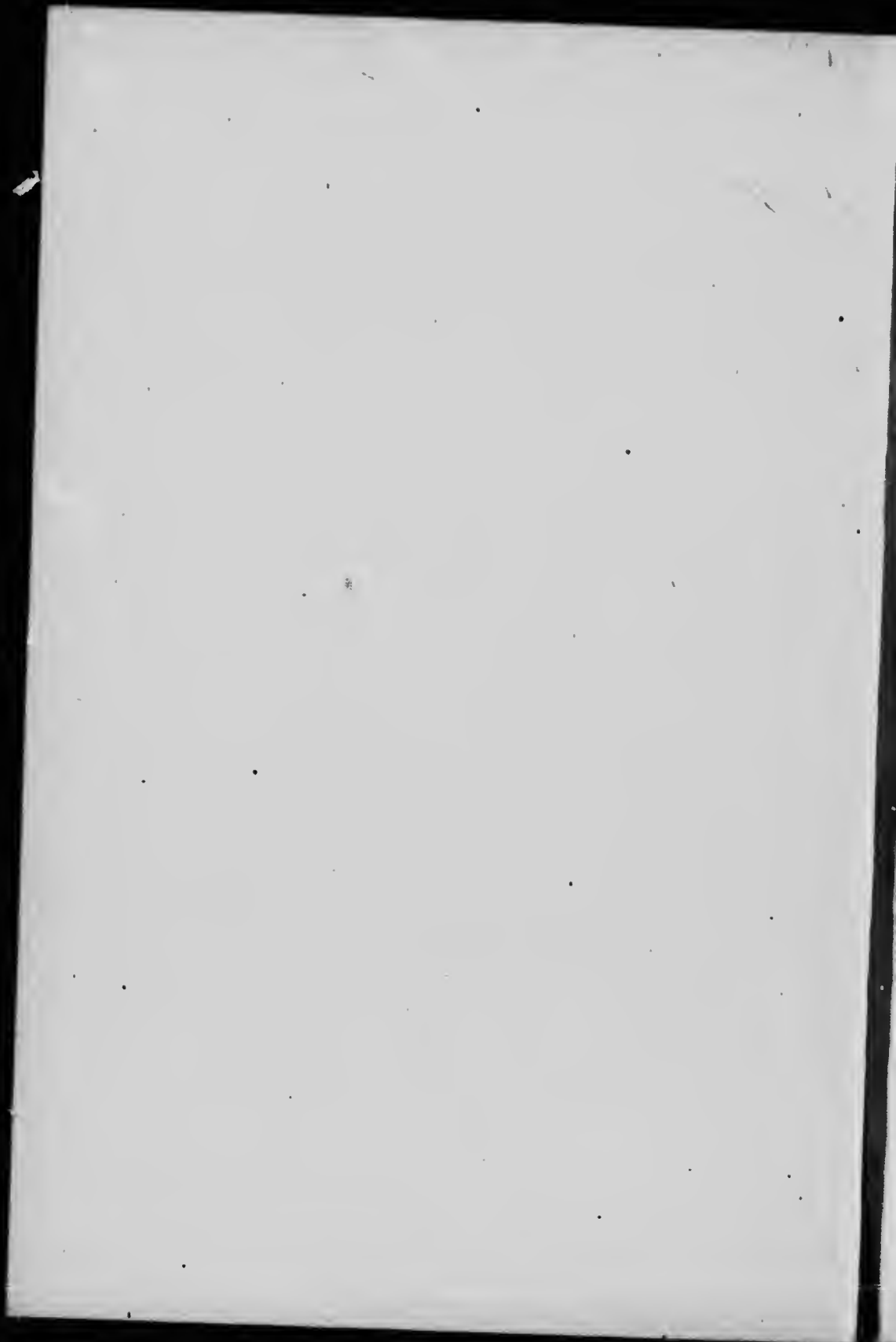


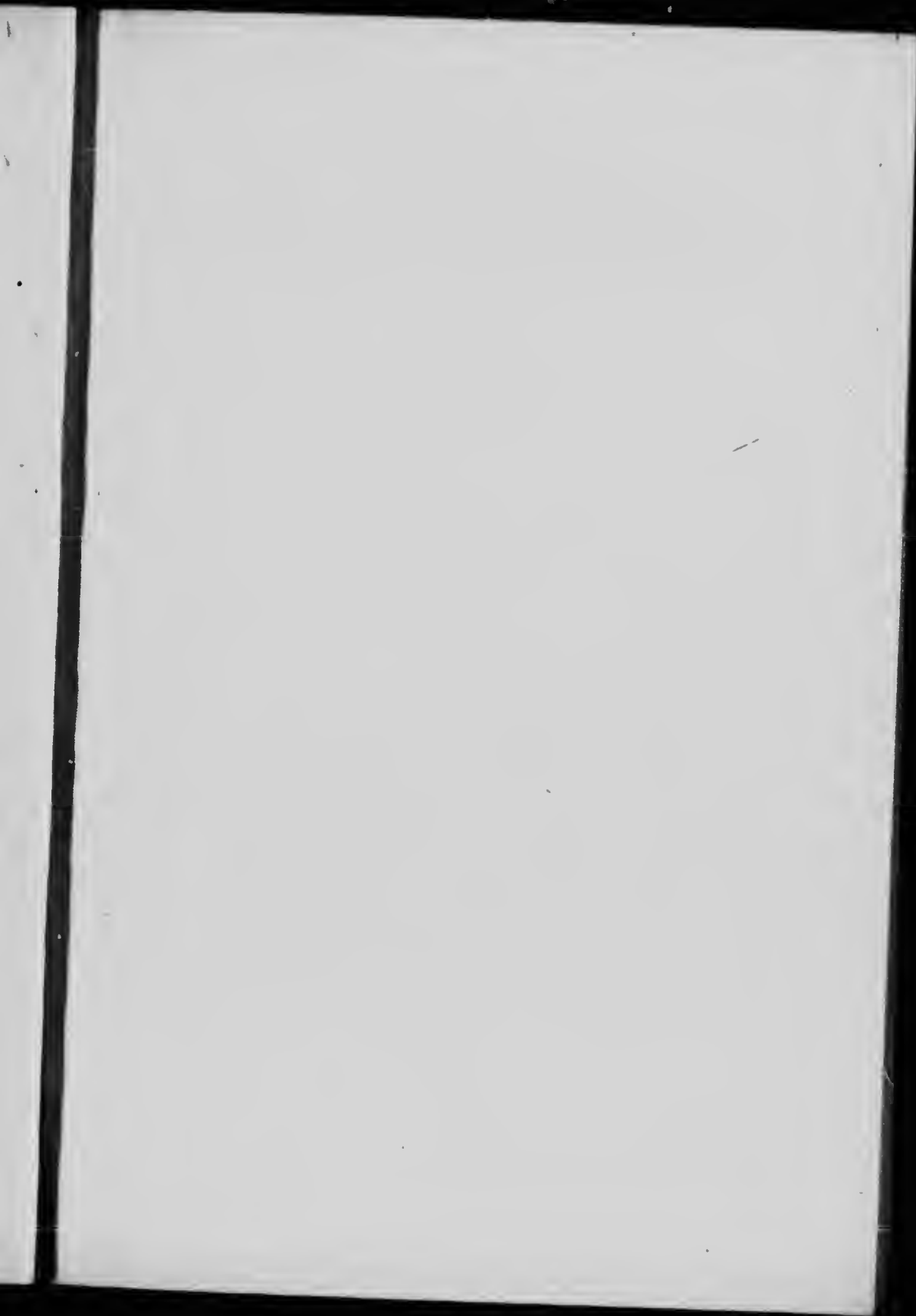
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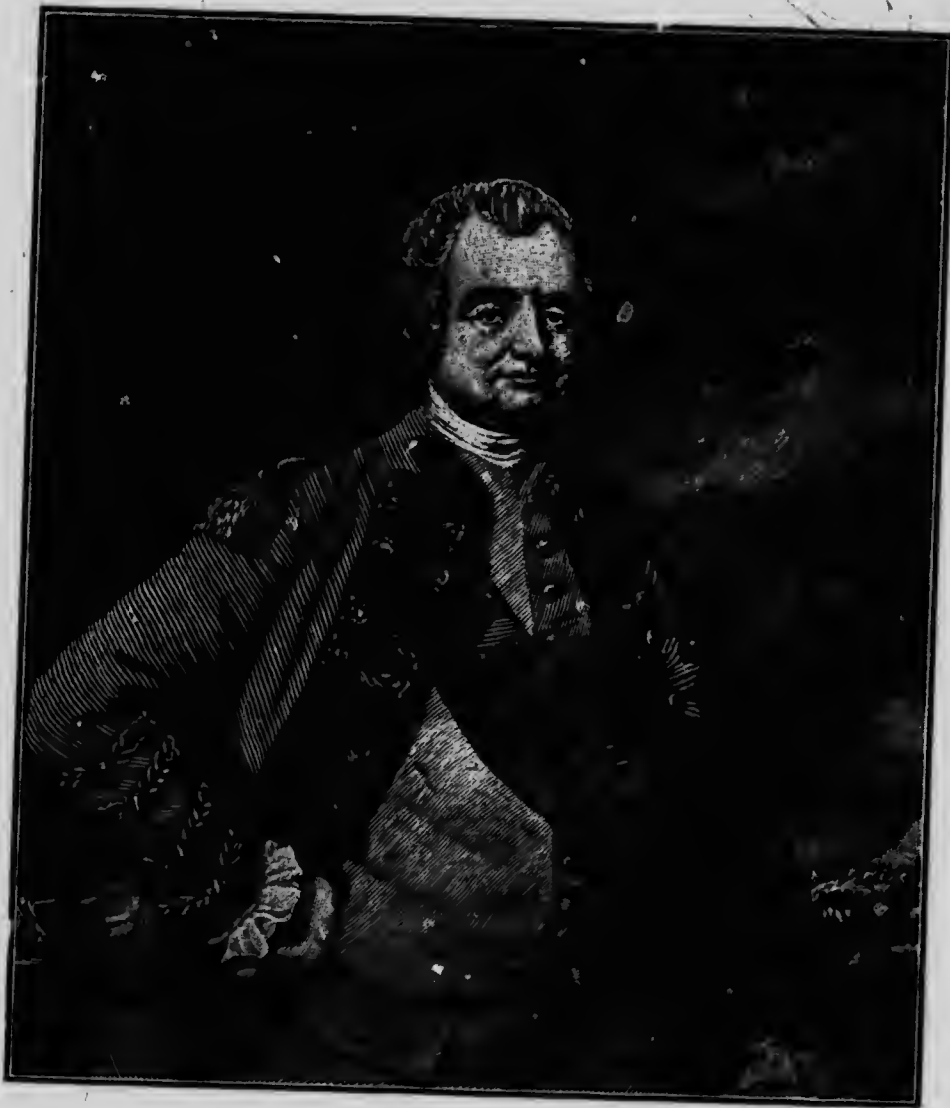
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CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY

CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY:

A LAY OF EMPIRE,

AND OTHER POEMS



BY

J. B. MACKENZIE

OF OSGOODE HALL, TORONTO

**Author of "Thayendanegea: A Drama,"
"Alfred the Great, and other Poems"**

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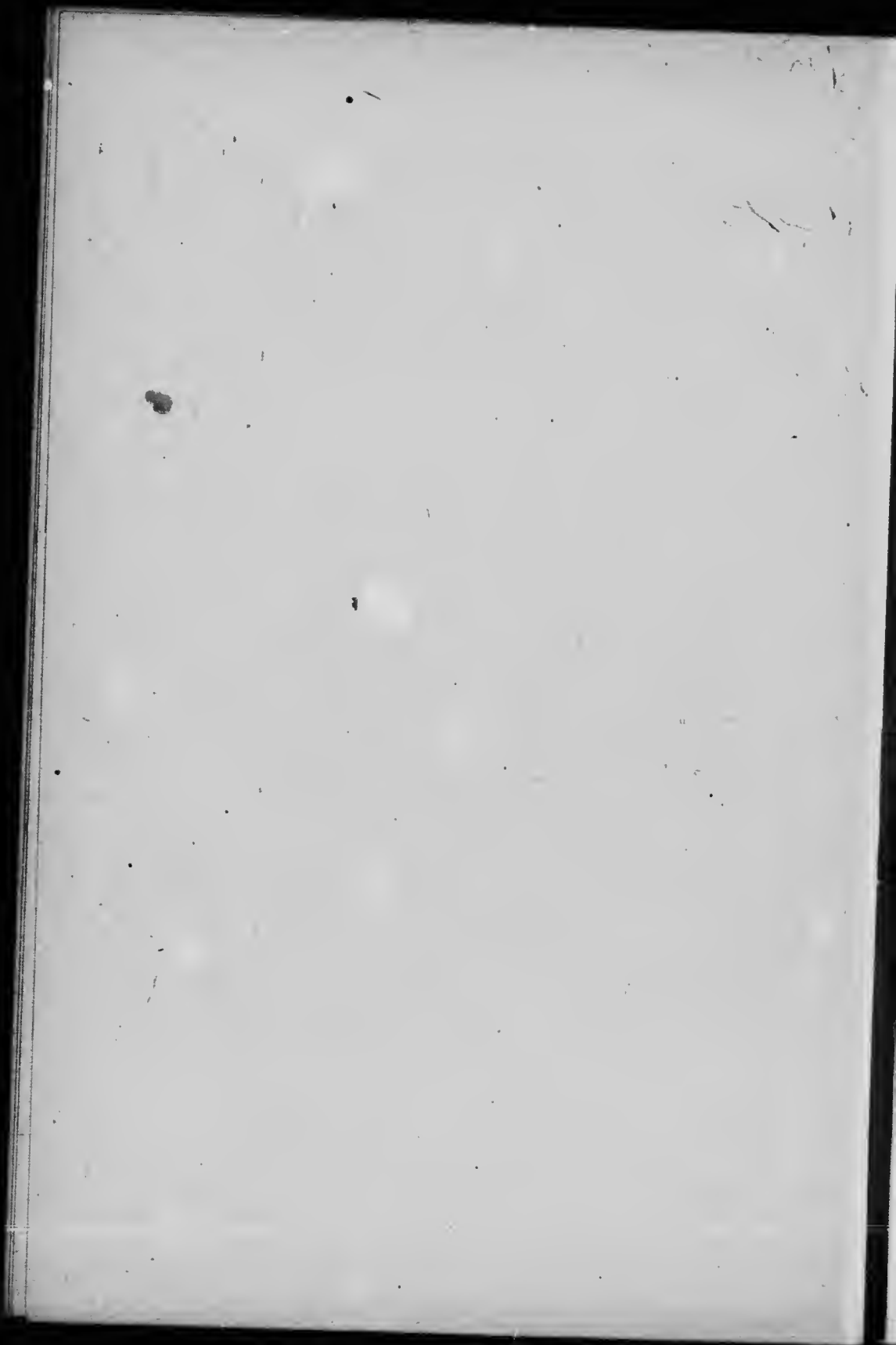
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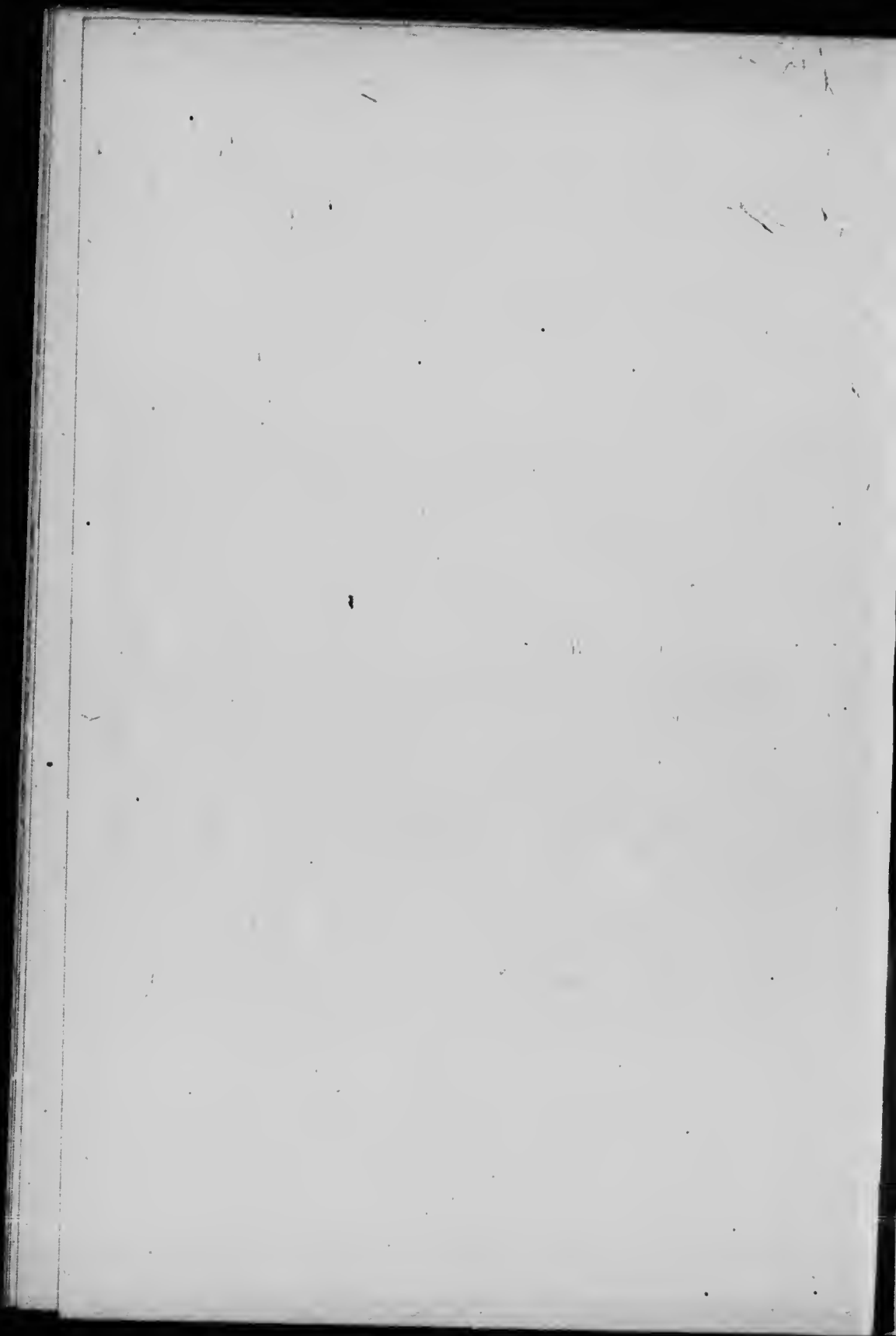
**THE HON. SIR ALLEN AYLESWORTH, K.C.M.G., K.C.
LATE MINISTER OF JUSTICE;**

who, by his attitude and course on two memorable occasions, upheld conspicuously the interests of the Empire, this volume—the subject of whose principal effort was at once the greatest Imperialist of his age, and in the united civil and military relations the most commanding figure of the last half of the eighteenth century—is, by way as much of recognition of his unchallenged standing in the author's profession, as in token of a friendship with him of thirty-five years, dedicated.



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CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY

INTRODUCTION

The famous Clive was, in youth—annalists of the time record—like the exponent of irresponsibility and the personifier of deviltry. And he seems, now adolescent, to have found immediately, or nearly so, after his entering upon them the

ERRATA

- In "Clive, Baron Plassey," verse v, line 2—For "had oracle managed to" read "did oracle."
In "Clive, Baron Plassey," verse XLIII, line 3—For "Famine preying—effluvia gross"—read "Famine's scourging woes."
In "Clive, Baron Plassey," verse LXV—For "Titan's" read "Titans'."
In sonnet "Joseph Chamberlain," page 45, last line—For "Wits" read "Wit's."
In sonnet "Lady Austen," page 45, 5th line—For "balm" read "barm."
In sonnet "Stoney Creek," page 50, 11th line—For "beholders" read "beholder's."
In sonnet "Joseph Brant," page 51, last line—For "roll" read "rolled."
In notes to "Clive, Baron Plassey," page 53, 15th line—For "forms" read "form."
In notes to "Clive, Baron Plassey," page 59, 8th line—For "unforseen" read "unforeseen."
In notes to "Clive, Baron Plassey," page 60, 21st line—For "the same writer" read "Arbuthnot."

trunguisung ms course or denavior—with him, the reservoir of animal spirits had simply to discover an outlet of one kind or another.

In the light of what has been premised, Life, when he acquainted himself with his novel surroundings, would, in the case of a temperament like his, where a match ever lay close to the powder-magazine be—one may safely conjecture—a very "Old-Man-of-the-Sea," from the sustaining perpetually of whose burden no escape seemed possible; nor can it be fantastical to suppose him, so weighed down, calling up, and with bitterness applying to his own situation, Hamlet's dreary



CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY

INTRODUCTION

The famous Clive was, in youth—annalists of the time record—alike the exponent of irresponsibility and the personifier of deviltry. And he seems, now adolescent, to have found immediately, or nearly so, after his entering upon them, the work-a-day, unlively duties of a "writer" in the East India Company, not less irksome than uncongenial. His early conduct, expressed by deviations from a sane perpendicular, which must have awakened the family's concern, had, in truth, necessitated acceptance by him of the post, then fortunately available; his father indulging the hope that correction, in whole or in part, of the extravagances to which his peculiar bent gave rise, at home, might agreeably ensue. Not a few, though, of these vagaries—that, for instance, which lends him to posterity as climbing the lofty church-steeple at Market Drayton, in Shropshire, with intent to possess himself of a stone lodged in the mouth of a gargoyle, and, with perfect aplomb, spreading his legs over the spout—as the birds'-nesting adventure may serve to do with the child Nelson—come by way of earnest of the spectacular, yet magnificent, daring he was in after years to exhibit. Here it may not be unfittingly added, that there was, at this period, little or no bravado distinguishing his course of behavior—with him, the reservoir of animal spirits had simply to discover an outlet of one kind or another.

In the light of what has been premised, Life, when he acquainted himself with his novel surroundings, would, in the case of a temperament like his, where a match ever lay close to the powder-magazine be—one may safely conjecture—a very "Old-Man-of-the-Sea," from the sustaining perpetually of whose burden no escape seemed possible; nor can it be fantastical to suppose him, so weighed down, calling up, and with bitterness applying to his own situation, Hamlet's dreary

INTRODUCTION

confession, "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world."

Discovering thus in the character of his work little promise of a future to satisfy, in a measure even, the profound craving of his nature for exertion in some lofty sphere—dragging out an existence, to his filmed vision, without oasis in the melancholy Sahara of prospect, ever seeming to widen before him, he, one day, laid hold of a pistol, too kindly at hand for the consummation of his purpose; and, raising it to his head, pulled the trigger. A flash-in-the-pan resulted. Endeavoring a second time to end his gloom-oppressed life, again the weapon missed fire. Dashing it finally to the ground, he uttered the pregnant exclamation: "I must be, (or am) reserved for something." We are given a slight variant of the episode: a friend having entered his room after these two fruitless attempts, he was requested by Clive to discharge the pistol's contents out of the window, which he successfully did; the expression quoted following, supplemented by the words: "I have twice snapped that pistol at my own head, and it would not go off." Thus was, in a moment, demolished, as it were, the elaborately-spun fabric of his own distorted fancy.

Having emphasized this unhappy, yet, in view of its outcome, propitious occurrence—the medium which turns our eyes upon the first page of the pulse-quickening, breast-kindling romance of India (so far as any really important share of the English in it goes), it would, the recounter imagines, be hardly fair to its subject not to relieve the picture by mention of the circumstance that Clive's early recitals of his experiences—confided, in his overpowering desolation, to his parents in England—as though offered in apology for his erratic boyhood—were, in tone, sufficiently composed and grave, while breathing the warmest affection for those unwillingly parted from.

CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY

I

"Truly, for something " Fate reserved,
(Which oft hands Lazarus Dives' purse—
Has changeling left with infant's nurse)
Thee, from thy lawless bent mild-swerved.

II

"Sitting, and clothed," * * * "in his right mind"!
Here, Thought's lens catching, Memory's plate
Holds, image of his kindred state;
Whose breast awhile dark guests confined.

III

Transitions welcome both; upon
The sheet Change's dissolving views
Being cast—Despair flashed, Hope ensues:
Night's hood, as 'twere, stripped by the Dawn.

IV

Preach not, "Whom the gods love die young"!
Sanctioned were plea thy hand t'imbrue
In thy own blood (proving such true),
How would men's heart-strings have been wrung!

V

Unsailed the ocean broad of Life,
As yet, had oracle managed to secrete
Itself, like Jason's—to complete
His bark helping; with maniac strife

VI

Destined to cope; wise to instruct
 Him—soon to follow paths unknown—
 Touching his course, dim-grasped, alone:
 Free to his goal, e'en, to conduct;

VII

Voice, truth of which thou didst confess;
 And, tutored, launch *thy* argosy
 Upon the flood unshrinkingly—
 Gaining the harbor of Success?

VIII

Could sybil, though, more cause have found
 In thee paramouncy to foretell,
 Than him whose cheer kin would dispel,
 Yet whose meek temples Pharaoh crowned?

IX

Thought pleasuring that Vicissitude—
 Chameleon dressed in varying hues—
 May still, through one its sport, diffuse
 On every hand beatitude.

X

Man's Future—canvas, each void space
 Of which doth brush paint, as it wills,
 Of th' Artist High; with prospects fills—
 There will its chiaroscuro trace.

XI

Ladder of Wealth from thee, as Rank,
Withheld—by many used to climb
To eminence—sparedst thou not time
To rest upon Life's river's bank;

XII

But didst in thy broad thews confide
To breast the wave—o'ercome the storm—
Breakwater of thy will didst form,
Whose adamant barred each swelling tide;

XIII

Waived patron's crutch, stoodest erect;
And lions slaying in thy path—
Braving Goliahs in their wrath—
Wast thy own fortunes' architect.

XIV

The "Open Sesame" to Renown's
Cave learnt, quick did thy fingers grasp
Its wealth; of Glory's purse the hasp
Pressed fruitful; thine Exploit's rich crowns.

XV

Persuaded ne'er to casual breeze,
Unsteadfast, weak, to trim thy sails,
Weatheredst thou lightly Enmity's gales,
Recking not whom thou mightst displease.

* * * * *

XVI

The tool why hushed? If Providence
 Ruled not th' event, o'er quicksand-pit
 We hourly move; Chance rips (which knit)
 Being's robe—resolves the *Whither; Whence;*

XVII

Hope tricks us by its fallacy;
 Loses Concern its darksome leer;
 Doubt may be given shroud and bier;
 Time's use bequeathes no legacy;

XVIII

And well may we the doctrine hold,
 That or'y what our senses mark
 Forms—be it joyous, be it dark—
 Map for the wayfarer unrolled;

XIX

Whatever Happiness might cross
 Votaries banning; Pleasure to feed
 Avowed the staple of their creed;
 The present, gold—The Sight-veiled, dross.

XX

(To Virtue challengers lent the mace;
 One's Manhood steeling against Pain—
 Evil or none—or shadowy—bane,
 Where Self-Control had foremost place:)

XXI

Or subtle Omar hail as guide,
Who bids Man court—unheeding the frown—
Skies' smile; Man, gust-borne, like the down;
A twig whirled on the fuming tide;

XXII

Volition-robbed—a shuttlecock
Rising (to fall) in quiet air;
Driven to and fro, tossed here and there,
Under the battledore's light shock.

XXIII

Seems that below war ministries
Of Prospero kind and Caliban sour;
Genius, which, fondling, yet can-lower
Appointed earth-worms' histories.

XXIV

Tales of a sire's doom large in mind,
Who Theseus—framed worst ills to meet
Unblenching—ere full hazardous feat
Adventured was, did rigorous bind,

XXV

If home successful he returned,
A white sail for the black to raise;
That by the father's Love-bent gaze
His keel's approach might be discerned:

XXVI

But the vow from his memory
 (Joy-serf of his attained emprise)
 Vanished—Death following, in weird guise,
 How Fate can, by her cozenry,

XXVII

Appall! By her loose, foundling-brat
 Man held, she—cogging first the dice—
 To fling them will her dupe entice,
 Her qualms—the spider's toward a gnat.

XXVIII .

Like that of some Tartarean plight
 Of Sisyphus who—Torture-whipped—
 Impelled the rock, that ever slipped—
 Pain that should glut a demon's spite;

XXIX

Others the sisters' black nightmare
 Live through (plenishing a bucket's store,
 To leak unceasing, while they pour)
 Torment—chagrin—their doleful share.

XXX

Frequent is't not his bleak reward,
 Seeking with Destiny to contend
 (Marred Haman, who but wished to mend)
 To be hoist by his own petard?

XXXI

Strait dwell on of the mariners;
Who—ta'en what seemed a treasure-bag,
While their chief's energies did flag—
This rent, gales freeing—prisoners

XXXII

Mewed there: by such fatuity
(Since of them Aeolus had the fief
From gloomy Saturn) purchased grief
Immense—direst calamity.

XXXIII

Though Seed-Time look for Harvest's yield,
Blight can its promise bring to naught;
Ambuscade lies for rosiest plot;
Delight's choice bud may be congealed;

XXXIV

One hour a prize—the next a blank;
Plunged in despair; by hope o'erwrought;
Jousts "Up" with "Down," in human lot;
Tilt Gain and Loss, in turn, its plank.

XXXV

Many pursue that marsh-born gleam—
The errand mocking all their pains;
Trust the mirage, which permanence feigns—
To melt apace, illusive dream.

* * * * *

XXXVI

Mightst thou not, youth, thyself—by look
 Heaven-thrown, as Gideon, through his fleece—
 Have proved elect—(minutest picce
 Dew-visited, when—deep-awed—he took

XXXVII

The symboling coat, while, round the earth
 Lay thirsty) or— new-arowed sign,
 Pledging his arm support Divine—
 Here, Moistness found; there, chilling Dearth?

XXXVIII

“For something,” yes! scant-fledged thy cheek
 When thou—foregone the merchant’s stool—
 Chosest, in tent of Mars, new school,
 Reprisal on thy King’s foes to wreak.

XXXIX

Ind’s Romulus, than thou didst know
 Building much better, since thy grain
 Of mustard France could so disdain
 To plant majestic was to grow;

XL

While passing great the fall in store
 For that house built upon the sand;
 Nothing the impact could withstand,
 When rushed thy floods—when thy winds bore.

XLI

Fattehabad's proud obelisk—
Thou razedst in the public view;
So lettst Dupleix his folly rue;
For high stakes gambling, know the risk.

XLII

Whelmed, France—like those sufferance-estate
Determining by their covenant-breach—
Re-instatement's hopelessness to teach—
A flaming sword glimpsed o'er the gate.

XLIII

"For something," yes! thou didst resist
For poignant weeks the leaguer close
Of Arcot; Famine preying—effluvia gross—
Deed that world-homage did enlist.

XLIV

(First seizing—by comparison,
Achievement, gauged by effort, small:
For tempest's ire coming to gall,
Fled—Terror-numbed—its garrison)

XLV

Some insect frail, which into nest
Of pitiless hornets should intrude,
Might hope t'escape the hostile brood
More than thy few, whom thousands pressed.

XLVI

Next, Arni, Coverspank, Seringham—
 Fields where thy leonine force prevailed;
 When a Prince Rupert thou wast hailed;
 And left was Chunda a shorn lamb.

XLVII

Swift Covelong—Chingleput—falls
 Before thy stern, all-humbling sword;
 Diverting Law's and D'Auteuil's horde
 From Trichinopoly's harassed walls.

* * * * *

XLVIII

When almost dried the nauseous reek
 On Fury's blade; from Murder's hand
 Rough hadst thou snatched his vermeil brand;
 When less indulged was Rapine's beak;

XLIX

The back of Schism by thee broke,
 Thou from Law's garden-plot rank weeds—
 Violence, Brawl—didst pluck; for seeds
 Anxious to flower these fain would choke.

L

Then, for a space, removed the pall
 Erst shrouding it—Quarrel's attaint—
 Thou over land—worn, gasping, faint—
 Didst Peace's manna cause to fall.

* * * * *

LI

Fierce-storming Gheriah's flinty crest,
Of Angria the pirate-hold
(The outlaw seizing and his gold)
Thou didst, a flame-touched Paladin, wrest.

LII

Now, as the living drama's stage,
Bengal survey—ephod-like, strewn
With radiant gems; piled every boon
Creatures' thanksgiving could engage.

LIII

Breeze-caressed plateau, forest's gloom
Wealth showering—"land of corn, oil and wine;"
Dowry of surface and of mine;
All beauteous fabrics of the loom.

LIV

Hadst thou touched earlier Bengal's shore,
Would a "Black Hole" have been to curse,
(Fiend's work lips, trembling, yet rehearse;)
Would Passion there have oped Strife's door?

LV

Thy presence alone the basilisk's charm
O'er Suraj-ud-Dowlah might have cast;
Thy avenging breath, like simoom's blast,
Hell-furnace blacked, ere it should warm.

LVI

Calcutta's loss quick to retrieve,
 After his Belial-goaded sack;
 Chandernagore thou didst attack,
 And win; so weighty ends achieve.

LVII

"For something," yes! him forced to tame—
 Man-jaguar—thou, by Plassey's grove,
 (*Fifty* with thy *two*, thousand strove—)
 Madst brighter glow thy cresset-fame.

LVIII

Peddipore, Masulipatam;
 Where thou, for Britain, Conflans' might
 Didst baffle—dropping thus the right
 To "Northern Circars" in her palm.

LIX

On Conflict's board, thou Holland's move
 To steal the prize by hard toil won
 Checkmating (her best play outdone)
 Strategy high anew didst prove.

LX

(When she, 'tis vouched, would then defy
 Thy power; news whereof to thee came,
 Thou, ceasing not the leisurely game,
 Didst scrawl "Fight them immediately.")

LXI

Ashore victorious, and afloat;
The bolt of thy hand's forging rived;
No more could this have been survived
Than when proud hosts were Angel-smote.

LXII

By thee incontinent was suppressed
The vain Shahzada's mad revolt,
That bubble pricked; full headstrong colt,
Whose breaking-in was for the best.

LXIII

Arising, thou, clear-beaming star,
No marvel thou shouldst be, among
Those whom thou ledst, their "Sabat Jung"—
On field—through siege—"Daring-in-War";

LXIV

Or to assail, or to defend
The need, quiver of thy Resource,
Lending meet shafts—Dauntlessness, Force:
Resolution, Patience—to befriend!

LXV

In Warfare's clash, with no repulse
Meeting; ne'er at whose bosom clutched Fear
(Well the grieved State had thee to steer,
When Titan's grapples did Earth convulse!)

LXVI

A wizardry thou didst exert,
 Changelessly, o'er thy fellowman;
 Couldst, as lump-quartz—sluiced in the pan—
 Yields ore, base into pure convert:

LXVII

(As if custodian of that Lamp,
 Whose Slave would, chafing at delay,
 Its owner's least command obey,
 Alluring¹ men to breach and camp:)

LXVIII

Conscription pliedst, with force so mild,
 Pressure in Choice appeared to merge;
 Glad service, theirs whom thou didst urge—
 Thankful for being so beguiled.

LXIX

Breast-plated by a Fortitude,
 Against which Trial broke its lance—
 From which the darts of Stress would glance;
 Whom not Affliction's rod subdued.

LXX

Would not thy spirit be regaled,
 Knowing that in thy scions flows
 The regal, chaste blood of Montrose—
 Him for his patriot deeds impaled,

LXXI

Dismembered; with whom, as in zeal,
Didst thou, in Strength of Purpose, vie:
To rival whom couldst qualify,
As buttress of the nation's weal.

LXXII

If stout the truncheon thou didst wield,
With Clemency was it silver-tipped;
Thy precepts' wine, eagerly sipped,
Alike to heart and sense appealed.

LXXIII

When hadst thou, in Ruth-sleeping hour
Of Triumph, thy fair 'scutcheon dimmed
By cruelty? When had Anger brimmed
The cup—had any moved to cower?

LXXIV

Capacious arsenal the brain—
It; packed munitions at thy call;
Thought, bond-slaves keeping in light thrall,
Would slip, fasten—at will—their chain.

LXXV

“For something” yes! caught sufferers' moan,
Oppression's Minotaur, thou, bold-
Attacking, slew'st; o'er-long had rolled
The heaped fire down Abuses' cone;

LXXVI

Like whom the healing effigy raised,
 The hurt, necessitous then didst bring
 Mercy's new life—*that* magic spring
 Of wounds' relief, for eyes that gazed:

LXXVII

Hastening to beard, in their foul dens,
 Civic wrong-doing—Extortion; lash
 Men's chartered Theft (eyes wrath did flash
 Profanèd temple was to cleanse!)

LXXVIII

Ranst wolves to earth—vampires which drank
 Blood of zamindars', ryots', veins;
 To glory in the vivid stains;
 For strangling these, Ind thee may thank.

LXXIX

Could worse Maremma's dankness breed
 Than virus-fangs thou hadst to draw—
 Cauterizing an ulcer raw
 Lest it of gangrene be the seed?

LXXX

Marts beasts of prey's lairs having become—
 Plague-spots, from whose contagion dread
 Refuge was none, where might háve fled
 Th' imperilled; thick, enwrapping scum

LXXXI

The vessel's burden pure had clogged;
Buying and Selling in the grip
Of rampant lust, did much a ship
Resemble—manageless, water-logged.

LXXXII

"For something," yes! thy rude stroke cleft
Of Army-ilis the Hydra fell;
Then—offspring's blatancy to quell—
Them, likewise, of their gross heads reft.

LXXXIII

Knocked at the gates a turbulent foe,
When thus were Honor's claims abused;
Th' amalgam thou hadst, laboring, fused
Of Strife's retort would fear the glow.

LXXXIV

Thou—saviour twice of borders which
Pale sword of Damocles o'erhung—
Didst salve what venom'd cobras stung;
And, medicining, raise to wholesome pitch

LXXXV

Of vigor; sedulous maintain
Th' economy of a fruitful hive;
A drooping sovereignty revive;
Ushering in Stability's reign:

LXXXVI

From Crudeness anvil Symmetry;
 To fragments loose cohesion give;
 From meal shake out, in Forethought's sieve,
 All needed flakes of Purity;

LXXXVII

Didst Home-Life brighten; Trade augment;
 Finances, in decline, repair;
 Society make aspect wear
 Less dull—assuagedst Discontent.

LXXXVIII

Forcedst thou Anarchy to it, knees;
 Didst Riot pull from his lewd throne;
 And Calm for Ferment made t' atone,
 Devise an age of Pericles.

LXXXIX

So tree was, hoar as kingly, rid
 Of fungus, which of strength bereaves;
 Of locusts battening on its leaves
 By thee—grown emulous of the Cid.

XC

Here, Albion would have lost control;
 And she, Might's scales, 'gainst the world weighed,
 Long-dipping—shown like garment frayed,
 Hadst thou not Empire given a soul.

XC I

Well, Sower, Tiller, didst thou guard
Free-menaced interests of the State—
Though Snare molest, Feud agitate—
Thy broad schemes' issue to retard.

XC II

Pioneer, whose landmarks have defined
Polity's bound—outlined Rule's chart;
To which those playing their high part
Since have becoming worth assigned.

XC III

Baptism earned—Pitt's "Heaven-born general";
Who, a : thy Valor wedded Skill;
Wisdom, in Council, didst instil—
• A primacy joint and several.

XC IV

For Oriental—Orient craft—
Thou, in thy calm strength, wert full match;
The feline habit prone to watch,
His every wile to scorn hadst laughed.

XC V

Last—harness doffed—when, reaching home,
Lilliput curs must round thee flock,
Their onset viperous didst thou mock,
As would cliff's-base hurl back the foam.

XCVI

Foiled, then, was Malice's edged thrust;
Flew thick (in vain) the barbs of Spleen;
Nor Calumny foul, nor Hatred keen
Could tread thy laurels in the dust;

XCVII

Who starter of the hue-and-cry
But he that, ere five speeding years,
To ripen was the Kingdom's fears
By Saratoga's travesty!

XCVIII

Often the high soul's pinions lamed
By form which gusted Pain, thy task
The grander was; thee does it ask
Among the Deathless to be named;

XCIX

Quarrying—fashioning—the blocks,
Whereof the mason, Hastings, reared
An edifice that has not feared
Or Home-brewed plots, or aliens' shocks.

DOGGER BANK

(Commemorating the extraordinary act of the Russian Admiral, Rojhentsvenski, in firing on the Hull fishing-fleet, during the Russo-Japanese War—the date, October 21st, 1904, curiously enough, being the anniversary of Trafalgar. An event which thus nearly precipitated war between Great Britain and Russia happened on the self-same day in the previous century, as one that, so far as trials of strength upon the seas went, ended hostilities between the first-named power and the allied forces of France and Spain.)

Contenders with him for Poseidon's realm;
Both splendid courage and imperious will
Summoning to baffle his autocracy
(For such large need when tempests, gathering head,
Arise winds' passion, billows' mutiny)
Bending your limbs t' exacting husbandry—
Decks of your fathers' hulls the nursery
Of Drake's, Anson's disciple—Byron's heir: *
Who—like ore, heated in the crucible
Of Pain, which tries ye, issue gold refined;
Oft knowing those dull sinkings of the heart,
By fishers lowly on Tiberias
Felt when, having toiled all night, they nothing caught;

* Captain James Cook. What the writer hopes will not be deemed too great a licence has been taken here. The renowned South Seas navigator was, in reality, apprenticed to the master of a Whitby collier; but, plying, as this kind of craft did, in the same waters, and there being more or less similarity in the types of vessel engaged in both industries, the liberty in question was hazarded.

Thus Labor—Patience—failing of their meed;
Whose days of Conflict merge in nights of Strain—
Hope in ye grown a starveling, Joy foredoomed
To perish, ere it, blossoming, expands
(In present Ill, though, sighting future Good—
Wrestlers, like Jacob, till the blessing come)
Is't not enough to ask ye to confront
Perils that would the stoutest nerve depress;
Reverses which the spirit's calm bear down;
Hardships which narrow, lame the body's strength,
But ye must wait the blow of curtained foe—
Be threatened by stiletto's infamy;
Each should, with complaisance, his naked breast
A target lend for vile masked murderers?
Have ye, that ceaselessly are bidden face
A never-sleeping, treacherous enemy;
The rigor which possesses Boreal skies—
With every sense awake, strive to defeat
Ambushes your Fog-aproned cliffs prepare;
By Destiny's fiat, ye, required to stoop
Under that crushing, Atlantean weight;
Invited always, it would seem, to drink
Of Life's wine little save the bitter lees,
To gratify, withal, an ogrish whim—
Passive, endure a wild beast's truculence?

WOLFE

From stock deriving of the Paladins
(What purer Bayard lived—sweeter Montrose?)
Thy prowess rubriced is on Warfare's page;
For this affording History's emphasis,
Let Dettingen's far-echoing triumph speak;
Let Sorrow's fountain drear—Culloden—speak;
Let Flemish bivouacs—din of Laffelt—speak;
Let Louisburg's decayless wonder speak;
Let Sillery—the Plains of Abraham—speak;
Thee, Action, charged with tonic virtue, braced;
Thee Zeal upbore, mid galling kindrances;
Thee Hardship, Trial, served but to anneal;
Extracted here, from lode of Humankind's
Ore-in-the-mass, Genius' residuum.
Clear-sightedness' brain—calm pulses of Resolve
Were thine; Prevision's eye; the steelèd breast
Of Fortitude; Despatch's arm. The loins
Hadst thou of Energy; displaying throughout
Peterborough's fire—ample resource of Monk—
Didst blaze for after-questers Glory's trail.
Every demand-bill paying Urgency
On Self-Reliance drew, thou still couldst leave
A fitting surplus in the treasury,
Plot, Execution—that of Purpose's line
The start—this terminus—in the one bold
Thou provedst thyself, as in the other skilled.
In thee Discretion's office that of buoy,
Thankful advising thee of Danger-shoals—

T' elude the cryptic rocks of Harm, Religion—
 Howso great the strain, from dragging saved
 Thy vessel's anchors; Faith e'er usedst thou
 For alpenstock the readier to mount
 The steep acclivity of the Higher Life—
 Principle, with thee—as t'were—a flange to insure
 The moral wheel's abiding on its rail.
 To rulings of that Court, in breasts of men
 Established (meant to be one of sole resort)
 By thee invoked, at moments critical;
 But which the many either do not crave,
 Or, being announced, will stubbornly dispute—
 Carrying to Bias a foregone appeal—
 Thou didst immediate, unquestioning, bow.
 Ne'er volte-face mad'st thou, spurred by Interest;
 Hadst upon see-saw of Expedience swung;
 No blot on pure sheet dropping of thy life,
 Trod changelessly the path of Rectitude.
 Suffering-warped as the timbers were that went
 Thy body's fragile, weak craft to compose,
 Always Serenity would thy spirit keep
 (Over the Pain-scuffed clay firm suzerain)
 Above the hemming billows of Despair,
 Preferment's bending fruit to pluck would'st thou
 Not turn; passive, it fell into thy lap;
 Absent the fulcrum which High-Birth allows
 Man's Effort's lever often to exert,
 Renown's peak didst, the nation's idol, win.

NOTE.—This poem has, with a few verbal changes, been reprinted from "Alfred the Great, and other poems."



ST. PIERRE AND HARBOR

[To face page 35

THE DESTRUCTION OF ST. PIERRE

ISLAND OF MARTINIQUE, W. I.

[The writer has, for reasons that may be deduced from perusing the verse, placed the description of this unexampled horror in the mouth of a native, Siberace—the only survivor, who was then a prisoner under sentence of death, occupying a subterranean cell in the gaol of the City—a fact which serves, no doubt, to explain his marvellous escape.]

“Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. * * * And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD; And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.”—Gen. xix., 24-28.

“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness was under his feet. * * * He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. * * * Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.”—Ps. xviii., 7-9, 11-13, 15.

“And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee until thou be destroyed. And thou shalt grope at noon-day, as the blind gropeth in darkness.” * * * —Deut. xxviii., 23, 24, 29 (part).

I

Has Order back to Chaos drear, then, passed?
 The mould, for æons lasting, of the world,
 Would some bold, impious finger have recast;
 Nature itself by Nature's forces whirled,

II

As flail extrudes the chaff? Whose fangs despoiled
 Thus Beauty's form, leaving Unsightliness?
 What fers-de-lance his vengeful shape uncoiled,
 To prey, with his forked tongue, on Loveliness?

III

"Le Pays des Revenants"—loved Martinique,
 Well meriting such name; Occident's pearl—
 For aught which glads not vainly doth one seek
 In you—round which twin oceans' blue waves curl.

IV

Pressed in your hoop of basalt-crag:
 Where valley valley greets—mount signals mount;
 Soil yours that many a bright savannah flags;
 Whose trees, blooms, ferns—the eye quick fails to
 count.

V

Tiaraed palmiste—ceiba—tamarind;
 Haughty balisier; silken-tressed bamboo;
 Stirred now by Carib's—now, Atlantic's wind—
 (Forest gems all) the scented ether woo.

VI

Bathed in the sunshine of your limpid skies;
 Lulled by the whispering of your balmy airs;
 Whence Gloom is banished—whence Vexation flies;
 Where Humankind disrobes itself of cares.

VII

Of milk and honey, verily, a land
 Whose fair gown rivers choice embroidery yield;
 Whose nectarine fruits meet every taste's demand;
 Whose hilltops Dawn shows in a mottled field.¹

VIII

Your noblest city, all her jocund swarms,
 In twinkling of an eye, to know such end;
 (Her natural dowry heightened by Art's charms)
 Ruin's dart on Man—on Man's work—to descend!

IX

Blithe, comely, why shouldst thou, St. Pierre, a doom
 So cruel have suffered—by no deep guilt bought;
 Thy full, warm Life's sands running out in gloom,
 Kind feast have spread for Car of Juggernaut?

¹“La façon d'être du pays est si agréable, la température si bonne, et l'on y vit dans une liberté si honnête, que je n'aye pas vu un seul homme, n'y une seule femme, qui en soient revenus, en qui je n'aye remarqué une grande passion de retourner.”—Le Père Dutertre (1667)

“Not a few travellers have asserted that the Island of Martinique, when at its best, came as near to realizing the ideal of a Paradise on earth, so far as climate and scenery could make it, as any portion of this mundane sphere.”—Ober, in “Our West-Indian Neighbours.”

X

(If to chastise thee Fortune's sky thus lowered;
 Its harsh clouds brewed that visitation dire.
 Like huntsman thou, by his own hounds devoured,
 Who had, unwitting, roused Diana's ire.)²

XI

Not even Babylon's, Nineveh—not her
 Swift blotting out; Pompeii's holocaust,
 Largened to view by Herculanaeum's, were
 Like thine, when the ballista here uptossed

XII

Its deadly compost. Bars of mud and steam
 Recurrent belched from the Appolyon's throat,³
 In so compact, so tenebrous a stream,
 That fulgent Day assumed the raven's coat;

²Not a few of the inhabitants had, on the previous Good Friday, so it was reported, indulged in a series of disgraceful mummeries; a circumstance which—perhaps more distinctly impressed upon the minds of certain survivors at the capital and other points in the Island by the knowledge that the catastrophe happened upon a later holy day—the Feast of the Ascension—in that year 1802, May 8th, (for the multitude, alas, a Saint Bartholomew's Day instead) prompted them to accept the retributory view of its origin which the stanza records.

³“Now the monster was hideous to behold: he was clothed with scales like a fish, and they are his pride; he had wings like a dragon; feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion.” * * * “And with that he [Appolyon] threw a flaming dart at his [Christian's] breast, but Christian had a shield in his hand, with which he caught it, and so prevented the danger of that.” * * * “Then did Christian draw,

XIII

Then seemed to fill the air dense trellises
Of gas-veined, billowing vapour; these with glare,
As of fleet's broadside, hurled; blast-furnaces
Adding, in wreaths and coils, their mighty glare.

XIV

Earth, Air, Fire, Water—each had part
In genesis of that maleficent grape;
That, leaping, charging, found St. Pierre's heart—
Closed every avenue to her of escape.

XV

Fired by the catapult far up the sky,
The lurid mass hovered—then, like a fan
Outspreading, instant from those cloud-stairs high
Plunged, Decimation-winged—rear, middle, van.

XVI

What though Pelée for half a century—
The fever intermitted—his desires
Nefarious cloaked, might none the gossamer lie
Detect? Banked simply were his demon-fires.

for he saw it was time to bestir him, and Appolyon as fast
made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail." * * *
"In this combat no man can imagine, unless he had seen and
heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Appolyon
made all the time of the fight—he spake like a dragon; and
on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from
Christian's heart."—Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

XVII

Thought Might, on Reason's anvil beat, have more
 Luminous sparks thrown up than flew in haste;
 "We cannot sleep for the volcano's snore";
 "What valuable cement is going to waste!"

XVIII

The venturers full soon their idle jest—
 Turning on Torture's spit—had to regret.
 Was he not, waked from sleep, as giant refreshed
 With wine, but deeper horror to beget?

XIX

Events had littered omens. Rabid Saul,
 "Threatenings and slaughter breathing out," his
 mood,
 Less clear voiced than La Montagne would appall—
 Such the roars vented; such the mire out-spewed;

XX

Fonds Coré's, Basse Pointe's woe; the Guerins' fate,
 Sprung from those ebullitions of his wrath,
 Men their Fool's Paradise warned to leave—not wait,
 Falsely secure, in Desolation's path.

XXI

La Blanche's pitch—o'erflowing of its banks;
 Vale of the Prêcheur's emerald bosom rent—
 Her innocence deflowered—were these light pranks:
 Rare spectacle each for hinds' diversion meant?

* * * * *

XXII

What prodigal, inhuman sacrifice,
Humoring Kali's—quieting Moloch's—lust,
Toll reached of victims of that blunt surprise,
Offered by one to those, who child-like trust

XXIII

Placed in him—Leur Ange Gardien—to shield
Them from least harm—avert calamity?⁴
Too well by his sheep's clothing was concealed
The forage-scenting wolf's rapacity.

XXIV

Not caravans the baleful Kamsin's blast,
A seven-times heated furnace, will o'ertake—
Fast to enfold, as to annihilate fast—
Would thirst allay the fiend here bent to slake,

XXV

Less havoc when is freed by Alpine crest
(Folding in its embrace the edelweiss)
Heaviest of ordnance—on the vale, at rest,
A mad, resistless behemoth of ice,

XXVI

No such battue when o'er vast table-land
Of the Great West riots the dread cyclone;
Or pampas into Fury's blaze is fanned—
Its scythe put in, has ample harvest mown.

⁴ Mont Pelée, or La Montagne, as it was familiarly known, was held in veneration by the African and half-breed population of Martinique as the Island's tutelary deity.

XXVII

The all-devouring, callous earthquake's jaws—
Hid, uncombatable seismic force—
Could, breaking equally accustomed laws,
Of parallel devastation be the source.

XXVIII

No dykes that equal-pressing tide could stem,
Felling the Virtue-clad, the stained with crime;
That hills should cover—mountains fall on—them
To pray, nor saint nor reprobate had time.

XXIX

Doors' lintels, with their side-posts, lacked the stain
Which a Destroying Angel's stroke must bar;
Lay here, at hand for the infecting bane
No antidote—in reach of none a spar.

XXX

Cut off strong, weak, old, young—their plight
The same; while toiler in the cane was reft
Of life, perished, with him, the ruler in his might;
One was not taken, and the other left.

XXXI

Grew Earth a shambles; bodies—cinder-swathed,
Tuff-gashed, loud for burial crying;—nor stopped
Indignity there—tissues with few unscathed—
Viscera-robbed were some; limbs from others lopped.

XXXII

Demolished now were homes: trading-booths wrecked;
 Fruit of men's labor—treasure—swept away;
 Nothing the cormorant's gluttony had checked;
 Left naught to feed the slow tooth of Decay.

XXXIII

Ships in the roadstead to the water-line
 Quick were consumed—the crews, if not choked,
 burnt,
 Flinging themselves into the eddying brine,
 The agonies of as grim—nay—worse death learnt.

XXXIV

Levels were fissured, and depressions raised;
 New channels rivers carved; in every wood
 Trees' foliage seemed, by the cement free-glazed,
 To compose a Franciscan brotherhood.

* * * * *

XXXV

Prisoners are sometimes found to hug their chains—
 A domino wearing, "Ill" may oft be "Well."
 What one lying there but would have all his gains
 Bartered with me for stones of my dark cell?

XXXVI

Polluted, grimed, for me, though, by a hand
 Mild to be spared; Heaven's favor to enlist;
 Plucked from the burning, solitary brand—
 Given *me* alone thus to be Angel-kissed!

XXXVII

Me has the Winnower—none else—preserved,
That would (ten pure found) have Extinction's bolt
On heads of many who the blow deserved
Forborne to cast, in Sodom's blind revolt!

XXXVIII

Eraseless imprint on my brow of Cain
Me Vileness mirroring—a synonym
For guile—the rest engulfed, why should he deign
To snatch *me* from the ravening abyss?

XXXIX

Rises on Evil—Good; His sun, defends
He both impartial; on unjust, as just,
With like solicitude, his soft rain sends;
Yet may its trampler, with the worm, be crushed.

XL

No comrade's voice to me, left sorrowing, floats;
A frigid catalepsy binds each street,
And once gay *Place*; hushed are the notes
Of men's rude clamor—steps of Childhood's feet.

XLI

Gorged leech, shouldest thyself have died, fell cone;
Thirty-five thousand beings their last bed
On earth giving; me they bequeath (no stone
Upon another left)⁵ this City of the Dead.

⁵“And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”—Luke xix. 44.



ST. PIERRE AFTER THE ERUPTION

To face page 44]

SONNETS

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN

Majestic tribune, whose high eloquence—
Casketing princely thought, by vivid phrase
Enamelled—thee on Commons' floor did raise
Above thy compeers: what munificence
The banquet such purveyed for hungerers' sense
(Reason's orb diffusing light which, radiant, plays
Around with fullness of meridian blaze:)
Hemispheres owned thy grave lips' influence.
When shall men catch those fervid syllables
Again; rapt, witness taloned Logic rend
Sophistry's web (draughts, the while, brought from
wells
Of Attic pureness) mallet Scorn descend
On Froth—Banality; hear jibe, taunt-scalpèls
To lacerate, gash—Wits' armoury could lend?

LADY AUSTEN

(The inspirer of Cowper's "Task," "John Gilpin," and others
of his poems.)

Athena who—thy lustrous beauty's charm
Vassalling the body's eye—cam'st to inspire
A gentle Orpheus; giving th' Æolian choir
Its purest voice. His mind's drear swales thy warm
Heart's sunshine pierced, lightning his mood—as balm
Can stir the languid mass; Jaques' attire
Perforce was doffed. Thy glad breath set the fire,
Smoldering, ablaze; calm'dst thou his breast's alarm,
Conjuror, by whose deft legerdemain
Our age reaps (with some light) his nobler verse,
Which strengthens while refreshing; lines whose strain
Wafts sound of vesper-chimes, as they rehearse
Nature's appealing works—smooth-gliding, terse—
Linked so with his, when shall thy glory wane?

VALE! PROFESSOR WILLIAM OSLER

(On leaving Johns Hopkins University and Hospital to become Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford.)

Sinks their Gamaliel from the earnest gaze
 Of whilom feeders on his weighty speech—
 The granaried wisdom he was fain to teach
 (Brilliance out[†] flooding, as of chrysophrase)
 That Wisdom's depth source, truly, of amaze;
 Who learns it learns a plummet's downmost reach.
 Where find assayer bullion to impeach
 That so clear testimony of worth displays?
 Its complement a broad humanity,
 Which serves to ennoble—glorify—his work;
 Such warmth of heart—wide ranging sympathy—
 As help to dissipate Sordidness' murk;
 Unceasing moved kind impulses to free,
 Seemed Altruism in trivialest deed to lurk.

SIR WILLIAM OSLER

(Upon his being granted a baronetcy).

Of service noble—spacious thought and high,
 Suffering to ease applied—this hail as meed,
 Though incommensurate. Pledged he to need
 Of Pain-crushed fellow Judgment's clarity;
 Skill's true gauge—boons, Heart-vased, that will not die
 Soon. "All create a brother"—such his creed
 Of Life. Ever must poor, attenuate seed
 A flower to coax the hot-house—Rank—defy.
 Growth of *this* plant, though, Favor's sun—
 Accident's showers—helped not; returns the sheaf—
 Good ground being sown—a hundred-fold. With one,
 Whom Genius' flame, in Science, early won
 Supremacy, Title burnishes the leaf,
 Mayhap—braid of his robe in Solomon.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE R. L. BORDEN

PREMIER OF CANADA.

Pilot, who summoned wast, by trumpet-call,
 To grasp, in hour momentous, grave, the helm
 Of gallant ship—duty which might o'erwhelm
 Spirit the most buoyant; charge to appall
 Brain the most far-seeing—pray no chance befall
 Thy skill t' impair; fidelity of Anselm—
 Sapience of More—be thine, propping the realm:
 Let Purpose arm thee; Courage thee enwall!
 Mariner, upon the tiller when applied
 Thy touch, ahead uncharted seas must lie;
 Beacons there may be few, or none, to guide
 Past frowning cliffs; each danger to espy
 Full hard will be; oft blurring fog may hide
 Safety's buoyed channel from the peering eye.

WILLIAMSBURG AND CHRYSLER'S FARM

(Battle fought November 13th, 1813.)

Proper that monolith should rise to mark
 The storied plot where gaunt wolf-pack was foiled;
 Wrath now of pestilent marauders boiled,
 Here to extinguish Well-being's fresh-lit spark;
 Have Ruin's maelstrom Aspiration's bark
 Suck down. These Naboth's vineyard would have spoiled;
 Homes—arpents—filched, to gain which brave men toiled
 Through years, Dole-weighted—perils many, dark,
 Heart-joying pleasance—vidette of the farm
 Morrison's proud feat hallows (Bane-fraught scene
 Of blood) thou which for land that upas, Harm,
 Chill breathed upon—thy foot washed by the "Queen
 Of Waters"—did a Jephthah* bear wise, keen;
 Ready, should Time e'er slogan fresh alarm.

* Sir James Whitney, who was born within a few miles of the battlefield.

GUERNSEY

(SARNIA OF THE ANCIENTS).

Rock dull, austere—from distant outlook traced—
 On closer view seen Beauty's lodge; whose trees,
 Large-boughed, mandolins are, soft played on by
 the breeze
 Grey Neptune looses; upland—valley—graced
 By flowers' mosaic, bright-hued, winsome-faced;
 Starring each hillside—carpeting the leas;
 Orchards'—fields'—largesse; parks bowing their knees,
 In dreamy languor, to the cincturing waste;
 Owed thee an Empire's benison! Gav'st thou Brock
 The lofty, pure—thy hearthstones' pride—to save,
 Weak outpost of the realm, when rogues the lock
 Would straightway force. Did not, as well, the brave
 Saumarez wolves keep from his tender flock,
 Isle which—its babe—the Channel's surge doth lave?

QUEBEC

(Battle of the Plains of Abraham fought September 13th,
1759.)

Eterne shall Diamond's air-throned cape endure,
 A lavish-catering volume for the mind;
 The eye, to most engaging picture blind,
 Which Memory's net may grasp—immediate cure
 For the defect—when this persuasive lure
 Has been outflung—doth, acquiescent, find.
 Let each its grave-clothes piously unwind
 Folding the past which these glad nooks immure.
 Phantoms of valorous Wolfe—steadfast Montcalm—
 On Fancy's knocker vehemently beat;
 Re-wins Champlain the triumphs men yet psalm;
 While Bigot—Frontenac—Oblivion cheat;
 Staunch Carleton, whom the leal in heart embalm,
 Performs anew his merit-spangled feat.

GLADWYN'S DEFENCE OF DETROIT

(Siege—lasting about six months—began May 10, 1763.)

Guerdon of eulogy warm to thee belongs,
 Who fiery Pontiac didst nobly check,
 Time when he strove Britannia's house to wreck.
 Conscious at no time, recreant, of wrongs
 To be redressed, poured he his ghoulish throngs
 On thy frail post (congregate flakes which speck
 A leaden atmosphere) wolves at his beck—
 No greedy pack more for its quarry longs—
 Ready to spoil and ravage. Brave the pressed fort,
 Slim-garrisoned, thou heldst, week after week,
 The muster always dwindling; calm thy port,
 Though Famine, entering, widened fast the leak;
 Till thy cooped refuge had—enceinte and court—
 With fetid vapors come, at length, to reek.

SIR JOHN MACDONALD

Linker of States which furthest leagues did part;
 Welder of jarring peoples into one;
 Our Faith-buoyed nation's most exalted son—
 Who yet its father wast—acute the dart
 Which pierced that nation's breast—alike on mart
 And ingle quiet fell a blow to stun,
 Apprized of thy bright planet's course being run,
 The steward lying closest to its heart.
 Pray we for stout Elishas to appear,
 And carry on the work thou didst begin;
 Thy vision more than justify, expectant seer,
 Of might in her whose fortunes thou didst spin—
 Borders thou, necromancer, foundst a mere
 Faggot—now realms a prince might gladly win.

TECUMSEH

(Battle of Moraviantown, or Thames River, fought November 15, 1813.)

Invites a mighty warrior the gaze:
 Full dignified his carriage—proud his mien.
 Him could not temporal advantage wean
 From Britain's side: 'gainst her—his—foe upblazed,
 Wrongs the fuel, Enmity's fire. He, with amaze,
 When told his leader would on policy lean
 Tame, paltering, with him strove—its folly seen;
 And won the day—no title weak to praise,
 Unknown the spot where lies that noble dust,
 Else Honor's plinth such hallowed turf would mark:
 His faithful tribesmen, dreading "Long Knives"* lust,
 Their chieftain's scar-ploughed body 'neath a dark
 Patch of the woods—a rude trench scooping—thrust;
 Great heart, sleep there, unvexed by earthly cark!

* A sobriquet given by the Western Indians to the United States forces.

STONY CREEK

(Battle fought June 6, 1813).

Swell breasts with pride, knowing this favored haunt;
 Accumulate dainties fall into whose lap;
 Which all kind, fostering dew's of Heaven wrap
 (Its robust freemen tossing back resisters' vaunt
 Proved those—whom scarce would load of Atlas daunt—
 On gore-washed field, veined with the parent sap;
 Patriots of that daring mortallest gap
 Closing, no single one, to be in want.
 Comely, indeed, are these rich-shawled parterres,
 Lake-curtseying; walled by Burlington's tall scarp;
 Beholders' sense their beauty soft ensnares—
 Power has to wake the minstrel's idle harp;
 Gay-tuniced fruit, grain which bright coiffure wears,
 Plenty's horn brimming, tongues forbid to carp.

JOSEPH BRANT

(Born 1742—Died 1807).

Sachem rebought of that kingly tribe,
 Which France—the Congress—each with vaquero's noose,
 Hoped to secure: would from ally seduce
 Owing its warriors' trust! Repelled they bribe—
 Withstood they flattery; hurling too, jibe
 Back at the leveller; nothing might loose
 From cherished nuptial-bonds; offer excuse
 For slaying a creed they cheerful did imbibe.
 Stout girder wast thou alway for the throne;
 Thy braves' allegiance ceasedst not to hold
 Unshaken—like the needle, which, unknown
 To deviate from the North, has ever told
 Of Constancy—were they as little prone
 Thee to desert, though Evil's tempest roll.

LAURA SECORD

Hardly is one persuaded to believe
 That she with selfless ardor could so burn
 As to essay her task: obliged to spurn
 Tender Love-ministries this to achieve;
 (Her husband lying then, sore-wounded) grieve
 O'er Duty's claims renounced, if she would earn
 The soil's redemption. . Given her to learn
 The invaders' object, she—intrepid Eve—
 As Dawn's rushlight came forth—the wilds her home
 Investing, entered; fain to expose their aim
 To Loyalist camp, endangered; there unburden some
 Of her guests' converse: body spent, bruised, lame
 Travel-worn feet, clueless, did frequent roam,
 Ere she might win Fitzgibbon's thanks—and fame.

THE PASSING OF BROCK

(Battle of Queenston Heights fought October 13, 1812.)

(The author deems it opportune here to remark that the monument at Queenston Heights gives Sir Isaac Brock's age incorrectly. The inscription affirms that, when killed, he was in his 43rd year, whereas he was born on October 6th, 1769, being thus in his 44th year at the time.)

What hero's life has found a meeter end?
 Could Atropos more suavely wield her shears?
 Wolfe, Abercromby, Moore—still on their biers—
 Each with his martyr's bays, urged him to spend
 His dear blood Time-arked liberties to fend.
 Like one that, breakers nigh, the vessel steers—
 Awhile tense pivot of men's hopes and fears—
 Was he, tough limb, which Stress might break, not
 bend.

Numbed every loyal spirit by dismay,
 When he fell, pierced—the dooming Valkyrs'
 choice—

He, roll unmatched of strenuous, avid clay;
 Under whose charge the sheep-fold might rejoice;
 And who shall ever move the poet's lay—
 Free levies make upon Laudation's voice.

NOTE.—This and the preceding seven sonnet are, with a few verbal changes, reprinted from "Alfred the Great, and other poems."

NOTES
TO
"CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY"

Verse XI.—"*Ladder of Wealth*," etc. Clive's progenitors, although from a period as early as the 14th century in the possession of landed property (Styche, near Market Drayton, in Shropshire, was the estate occupied by them nearly the whole time) enjoyed comparatively little wealth or influence; while none of them, since the close of the 16th century, when a representative of the family was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland, and had been created a Knight, was the holder of any personal dignity.

Verses xxxvi and xxxvii.—The author, seeking a prototype, might no less appropriately have turned to Cincinnatus, but an expression of the subject of the verse himself, introduced in one of those powerful speeches—a speech the elder Pitt declared the best he at any time heard in the House—which forms the justification for his course in India, prevailed with him to adopt the scriptural analogy: "In this critical situation it pleased God to make me the instrument of their" [the Company's] "delivery."

Verse xxxviii.—When the affair of Pondicherry—the first military operation in which Clive shared—took place, he was between 22 and 23 years of age, unversed in the most perfunctory way even, in the science of war. Devicota, where he greatly distinguished himself, was a few months later.

Verses xxxix and xl.—It is not speaking by the book to represent Clive as having terminated, either at this juncture, or subsequently, the well-nigh continuous hostilities between Great Britain and France in the Presidency (to use the East India Company's designation) of Madras. Contests, more or less desultory in character—Trichinopoly, the single fortress

of any importance left as an asylum for Mahomed Ali, the claimant for rulership of the Carnatic, whose interest the British had espoused, being the storm-centre—went on after Clive, in 1753, broken in health, who at this time wedded Miss Maskelyne, left for England. Many a desperate battle remained to be fought—Major Stringer Lawrence, Clive's companion-in-arms, at first, and Colonels Forde and Eyre-Coote afterwards, commanding the British; the last two having to cope with such thorough masters of war as Bussy and Lally de Tollendal, before France was at length stripped of every foot of territory which had been held by her in the East Indies.

Verse xli.—“*Fattehabad's*,” etc.—Dupleix, the French Governor at Pondicherry, their principal trading-post, against whom Clive's profound intellect and marvellous force of character were, in this crisis of his country's fortunes, time and again pitted, was, if not his superior, certainly his competitor's equal, in knowledge of Oriental moods and temperament; while he fell but little short of him in breadth of genius. The worsting by the English of the French gladiator in his deliberately chosen arena that was, after a short but sharp measuring of strength between them, to occur, resulted more from Clive's inborn capacity for directing warlike movements—a gift altogether lacking in his opponent, who had for this reason to commit the execution of vital designs to others, than anything else that can be discovered.

In order to a proper understanding of this reference, it should be pointed out that Dupleix, with the object mainly of impressing Hindoo and Mussulman occupiers of the soil with the peerless might and grandeur of his nation, had built a city bearing his and the name given, and erected there a pillar of majestic proportions, which bore inscriptions, detailing in half-a-dozen languages his victories, actual or supposititious, gained over the British allies. Clive, actuated

by kindred motives, levelled both vainglorious extravagances with the ground.

It would seem opportune, at this point, to remark that when Aurungzebe, the Emperor, or Padishah, familiarly spoken of as the "Great Mogul," died—the fabric of governance by native-born chiefs of India was plainly observed to be falling to pieces. There was under him (as before) a system, perpetuated, in the main, by his successors—component districts or provinces of a federated whole, over which subhadars were given the political oversight, there being next to them in authority the Nawab—*Anglice* Nabob—although some historians have looked upon these as virtually the same position. However this may be, the Padishahs were, for the most part, either spineless weaklings or indolent voluptuaries. Though none was behindhand in rigorously exacting homage from his dependents, he rather preferred the quiescent rôle of a luminary, around which they, as satellites, were deferentially to revolve. They—and the Subhadars and Nawabs, generally speaking, as well—were putty, whose handler of Caucasian origin, whether British or French, having the required finesse, could twist and roll as it might please his fancy. Macaulay has compared them to the later Merovingian kings—Chilperic and others—puppets obeying the strings pulled by the Maires-du-Palais, of the stamp of Pepin le Gros, or his son, Charles Martel. Chunda Sahib was, however, an exceptionally capable man.

Verse XLIII.—Thaumaturgy was brought into play here, if it ever has been in the world's history. The ramshackle defences of Arcot were so turned to account by Clive that an attacking force, outnumbering the garrison by 15 or 20 to 1, were held at bay for seven weeks. This wonderful achievement is, after the insertion of Lord Macaulay's brilliant description of it, summed up in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as follows: "In India, we might say, in all history there is

no parallel to this exploit of 1751, till we come to the siege of Lucknow in 1857."

Malleson affirms that "Arcot was the turning-point in the Eastern career of the English."

Where, from the high-souled leader, who thought it not beneath his dignity to fire cannon with his own hands, to the meanest of those hard-beset in the fort or trenches, the defenders' courage and determination were unflinching, it would savour of indecency to select any for special approbation; yet the spontaneous exhibition of devotion by the Sepoy contingent to their fellows of European birth, in foregoing the solid grain of the rice, and eking out a meagre subsistence from the water alone in which it was boiled, seems the very acme of selflessness.

Verse XLIV, lines 3 and 4.—The fort had been captured without the firing of a shot, the natives imagining that none other than Beelzebub himself could, in the terrific storm which was then in progress, have been their assailant.

Verse XLV.—Towards the end, the effective strength of the garrison was about 300, of whom less than one-half were British, while the assaulting ranks numbered 7,000.

Verse XLVI, line 1.—"*Seringham*." Before the seizure of this post, Major Stringer Lawrence had returned from England, and being the senior officer in Madras, took command. The success, though, here was Clive's individually, Lawrence having detailed him to accomplish the diversion sought. Samiavaram was the actual battle-ground.

Line 4.—"*Chunda*." Chunda Sahib, the Indian prince whom Dupleix had virtually seated on the musnud, or throne, as Nawab of the Carnatic, and who was the rival of the British figure-head, Mahomed Ali.

Verse XLIX.—The splendid tribute paid by Kipling in his "*Songs of the Cities*," to Clive for his rehabilitation of

British influence and authority in Madras, is worthy of being reproduced.

“Clive kissed me on the mouth and eyes and brow—
Wonderful kisses—so that I became
Crowned above Queens; a withered beldame now,
Brooding on ancient fame.”

Verse L, line 4.—It cannot in strictness be affirmed that a season of absolute peace, at the period embraced by this and the two preceding stanzas, came into being through Clive's instrumentality. As previously shown, war, for many years after, ceased to be waged during short-lived intervals only.

Verse LI.—The storming of this inaccessible fortress marks the renewal of Clive's activity, on his reaching India the second time. Admiral Watson was the commander of the fleet, under the protection of whose guns the military ventured upon the assault.

Verses LIV and LV.—Although Clive landed at Bombay before this fearsome tragedy, news of the occurrence did not reach Madras, for which he, meanwhile, had sailed, until August, 1756, about two months subsequently. The very day Calcutta fell, he assumed the office of Governor of Fort St. David, annexed to which station was the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the army.

Verse LVI, line 1.—Admiral Watson directed the naval operations here also.

Line 3.—“*Chandernagore.*” It was here the French had secured a footing in Bengal. The settlement and fort were about 25 miles from Calcutta, on the Hoogly.

Verse LVII, line 3.—The forces against which Clive had, with his 2,000, or possibly 3,000, men to contend have been variously estimated; the total, according to some, being

70,000. Plassey, which established the ascendancy of Great Britain, was fought exactly 100 years before that ascendancy, looked for a time as though it might be successfully disputed by force of the Mutiny.

Whether Suraj-ud-Dowlah, the Nawab of Bengal, who was now contesting the power of the Company, was more of the debauchee than wild beast cannot be safely determined. At all events, we have this opinion of him, furnished by Clive himself, in a letter to a member of the Indian Council: "For my own part, I am persuaded there can be neither peace nor security while such a monster reigns."

Verse LVIII.—That the chronological order of events might be preserved, the narrative had to pass from the Western coast to Bengal, and it now returns to Southern India, of which the "Northern Circars" may be said to be the extreme north-easterly portion. Peddipore the author finds spoken of by Orme only. As he was a contemporary of Clive, however, and privy to certain of the movements which he executed, some reliance ought fairly to be placed in him. The author would like to say here that it has often been the most difficult task in the world to extricate himself from the orthographical maze in which, as to the domain of geography research, placed him. Four or five variants in spelling are by no means a rarity, while the acceptance by any two writers of the same form would, apparently, be taken as evidence of imperfect knowledge of the country. Except where the rhythm of a particular line seemed to call for it, Colonel Sir Charles Wilson's monograph on Clive, "English Men of Action" series, has been the author's guide. Condore would seem to be identifiable with Peddipore.

Verses LIX to LXI, inclusive—The settlement founded by the Dutch was at Chinsurah on the Hoogly, a little south of Chandernagore. The writer of the article in the Encyclopædia Britannica on India asserts that "The knell of Dutch

supremacy was sounded by Clive, when, in 1758, he attacked the Dutch at Chinsurah, both by land and water, and forced them to an ignominious capitulation." It should be mentioned here that Clive did not conduct these operations in person. While the plan of campaign was evolved by him, it was Colonel Forde who carried it out so brilliantly.

Perhaps nothing in the man's whole career attested Clive's love of country more than this unforeseen difficulty. Notwithstanding the circumstance of his then having £180,000 of his fortune sunk in the Dutch East India Company, he did not hesitate for a moment to pick up the gauntlet which the foreigner threw down. His instructions to Captain Wilson, Forde's naval coadjutor—might, passed to Dutch ears, be likened to tongues of flame darting forth in the height of some huge conflagration: "To demand immediate restitution of our ships, subjects and property, or to fight, sink, burn and destroy the Dutch ships on their refusal." Biderra was the land-battle. To embarrass Clive still more, Great Britain and Holland were then at peace.

Verse LXII.—The Shahzada was the Padishah's son and heir-apparent. He seemed to be unwilling to wait for authority to descend to him in the course of nature, but, resenting what he thought the docile behaviour of his ruler towards his vizier, headed an insurrection. Clive took the field on this occasion himself, the event almost synchronizing with Peddipore and Masulipatam.

Verses LXX and LXXI.—Clive's grandson, the second Earl Powis, married a daughter of the third Duke of Montrose, the titles coming down to the present holders respectively in the direct line.

Since Clive exemplified, by his own career, the justness of the philosophy of life commended by them, the author cannot refrain from giving the noble lines of Montrose himself, who,

had he not chosen the sphere of activity which he did, might, he believes, have attained the highest rank as a poet:

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch
To win or lose it all."

Verses LXXV-LXXXI, inclusive.—Incredible as the portrayal of the situation dealt with by these stanzas may appear, one, committing himself to it, cannot be honestly charged with exceeding the truth. Sir A. J. Arbuthnot, the contributor of the article on Clive to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, depicts the state of affairs in this way: "The whole Company's service, civil and military, had become demoralized by gifts, and by the monopoly of the inland as well as export trade, to such an extent that the natives were pauperized, and the Company was plundered of the revenues which Clive had acquired for them." Add to this what Lord Justice James remarks, "The most rampant misrule and uncontrolled license prevailed in Bengal."

Clive, injecting his whole energy into the gigantic labor facing him, "de-orientalized" the same writer says, "the civil service by raising the miserable salaries which had tempted its members to be corrupt, by forbidding the acceptance of gifts from natives, and by exacting covenants under which participation in the inland trade was stopped."

So merciless had the treatment, indeed, of the natives become under the system which obtained that, as a commentator puts it, many of them fled to the jungle, preferring to take their chances with insensate beasts of prey than their malignant oppressors. The special reference in Verse LXXVII to "Men's chartered Theft" arraigns the custom of demanding presents from the classes in question.

The zamindar was the native enjoyer of the land, holding it direct from the Padishah; the ryot was his tenant, or lessee.

Verse LXXXII.—As a consequence of his having thus employed the mailed fist, which, no one probably, could, on occasion, come down with more hardly than Clive, Sir Robert Fletcher, the principal fomenter of the disaffection, was dismissed from the service; though his associates—an incident going to approve the blandness and clemency of the ruler's disposition—were, in most cases, on making due submission, pardoned and restored to their rank.

Verses LXXXIV-LXXXVIII inclusive, and part of LXXXIX.—As warrant for what might be conceived to be an overdrawn picture of the transformation Clive's genius wrought in India, the author has thought well to present, slightly condensed, his own review of the work he carried out there, which is incorporated in one of those passionate appeals by which he urged upon his countrymen its propriety and beneficence. No candid balancer of the scales has, so far as the author knows, deemed the recital an exaggeration. "After the Court of Directors had in the highest terms approved of the conduct of the Commission who had restored a government of anarchy and confusion to good order, who had made a peace with Suraj Dowlah by which they obtained upwards of £600,000 for the Company; who had quelled both a civil and military mutiny; who had established discipline and subordination in the army." * * *

Verse LXXXIX.—"*Grown emulous of the Cid.*" The patronymic of this extraordinary being, who looms so large in the records of Spanish chivalry, and to whom superhuman faculties were by many ascribed, was Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar.

Verse xc, line 4—The author had scarcely ventured to proclaim this view when he found himself aptly supported by a writer, whose name is not disclosed, living in the country itself. Speaking of the posture of affairs when Clive sailed for England after his first Bengal administration, the reviewer says: "It seemed as if the soul had departed from the government of Bengal."

Verse xciii.—“*Pit's heaven-born general.*” The allusion was made in a speech by the Great Commoner on the Mutiny Bill. That portion which lavishes upon Clive this unstinted praise contained these words: “We had lost our glory, honour and reputation everywhere but in India. There the country had a heaven-born general who had never learned the art of war.” * * *

Verse xcvi.—The author has no intention or desire, by weighing the pros and cons, to enlarge the discussion here. He contents himself with this extract from the biographer of Clive, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*: “General John Burgoyne, of Saratoga memory, did his best to induce the House of Commons, in which Lord Clive was now member for Shrewsbury, to impeach the man who gave his country an empire, and the people of that empire peace and justice.”

But for Burgoyne—in view of the profound humiliation which the disaster was to bring upon his country—of all men, to have depreciated Clive's imperishable work, “*O tempora; O mores!*” Gleig says that “had circumstances allowed of his (Clive's) taking the command in America, the dependence of the United States upon the mother country would have continued for at least another half century.”

Verse xcvi.—“*Often the high soul's pinions,*” etc. Beginning with the year 1750, soon after Devicota, when Clive had to give up work of every description, and proceed to the higher latitudes of Bengal to recuperate, he was visited by attacks, more or less serious, of ill-health, these being invariably heightened by his temperamental depression of spirits. When his second Bengal administration was about to close, his life was for weeks despaired of, and his condition for a considerable time after his return home, continued to excite grave apprehension.

With panegyrists in every land to keep the torch of his incomparable fame alight, the author is not driven to justify

the conclusion which the verse embodies. He takes occasion, however, to transcribe Arbuthnot's eulogium that "Clive in a remarkably short time, made for his family a name second to none in the history of the world;" an estimate, which, if just, magnificently fulfilled the prophecy of one of the lad's teachers: "that if his scholar lived to be a man, and opportunity for the exertion of his talents were afforded, he would win for himself a name second to few in the history of the world."

Verse xcix—It may not be generally known that it was on Clive's recommendation that Hastings—who, the next year, was appointed the first Governor-General of India—became Governor of Bengal. He, for a time, was one of the Council during Clive's second administration.



