

# LYRA HEROICA

A Book of Verse for Boys

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

*Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!  
To all the sensual world proclaim  
One crowded hour of glorious life  
Is worth an age without a name.*

*Sir Walter Scott.*

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## PREFACE

*This book of verse for boys is, I believe, the first of its kind in English. Plainly, it were labour lost to go gleaning where so many experts have gone harvesting; and for what is rarest and best in English Poetry the world must turn, as heretofore, to the several 'Golden Treasuries' of Professor Palgrave and Mr. Coventry Patmore, and to the excellent 'Poets' Walk' of Mr. Mowbray Morris. My purpose has been to choose and sheave a certain number of those achievements in verse which, as expressing the simpler sentiments and the more elemental emotions, might fitly be addressed to such boys—and men, for that matter—as are privileged to use our noble English tongue.*

*To set forth, as only art can, the beauty and the joy of living, the beauty and the blessedness of death, the glory of battle and adventure, the nobility of devotion—to a cause, an ideal, a passion even—the dignity of resistance, the sacred quality of patriotism, that is my ambition here. Now, to read poetry at all is to have an ideal anthology of one's own, and in that possession to be incapable of content with the anthologies of all the world besides. That is, the personal equation is ever to be reckoned withal, and I have had my preferences, as those that went before me had theirs. I have omitted much, as Aytoun's 'Lays,' whose absence many will resent; I have included much, as that brilliant piece of doggerel of Frederick Marryat's, whose presence some will regard with distress. This without reference to enforcements due to the very nature of my work.*

*I have adopted the birth-day order: for that is the simplest. And I have begun with—not Chaucer, nor Spenser, nor the ballads, but—Shakespeare and Agincourt; for it seemed to me that a book of heroism could have no better starting-point than that heroic pair of names. As for the ballads, I have placed them, after much considering, in the gap between old and new, between classic and romantic, in English verse. The witness of Sidney and Drayton's example notwithstanding, it is not until 1765, when Percy publishes the 'Reliques,' that the ballad spirit begins to be the master influence that Wordsworth confessed it was; while as for the history of the matter, there are who hold that 'Sir Patrick Spens,' for example, is the work of Lady Wardlaw, which to others, myself among them, is a thing preposterous and distraught.*

*It remains to add that, addressing myself to boys, I have not scrupled to edit my authors where editing seemed desirable, and that I have broken up some of the longer pieces for convenience in reading. Also, the help I have received while this book of 'Noble Numbers' was in course of growth—help in the way of counsel, suggestion, remonstrance, permission to use—has been such that it taxes gratitude and makes complete acknowledgment impossible.*

W. E. H.

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*For I trust, if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker  
out of the foam,  
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from  
his counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating  
yard-wand, home.*

TENNYSON.

# I

## AGINCOURT

### INTROIT

O FOR a Muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention,  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!  
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
Leashed in like hounds, should Famine, Sword and Fire  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,  
The flat unraisèd spirits that have dared  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold  
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
O pardon! since a crookèd figure may  
Attest in little place a million,  
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,  
On your imaginary forces work.  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confined two mighty monarchies,  
Whose high uprearèd and abutting fronts  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;  
Into a thousand parts divide one man,

And make imaginary puissance;  
 Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them  
 Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;  
 For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,  
 Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times,  
 Turning the accomplishment of many years  
 Into an hour-glass.

### INTERLUDE

Now all the youth of England are on fire,  
 And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies:  
 Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought  
 Reigns solely in the breast of every man:  
 They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,  
 Following the mirror of all Christian kings,  
 With wingèd heels, as English Mercuries:  
 For now sits Expectation in the air,  
 And hides a sword from hilts unto the point  
 With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,  
 Promised to Harry and his followers.  
 The French, advised by good intelligence  
 Of this most dreadful preparation,  
 Shake in their fear, and with pale policy  
 Seek to divert the English purposes.  
 O England! model to thy inward greatness,  
 Like little body with a mighty heart,  
 What mightst thou do, that honour would thee do,  
 Were all thy children kind and natural!  
 But see thy fault: France hath in thee found out  
 A nest of hollow bosoms, which he fills  
 With treacherous crowns; and three corrupted men,  
 One, Richard Earl of Cambridge, and the second,  
 Henry Lord Scroop of Masham, and the third,  
 Sir Thomas Grey, knight, of Northumberland,  
 Have for the gilt of France—O guilt indeed!—

Confirmed conspiracy with fearful France;  
And by their hands this grace of kings must die,  
If hell and treason hold their promises,  
Ere he take ship for France, and in Southampton!—

### HARFLEUR

THUS with imagined wing our swift scene flies  
In motion of no less celerity  
Than that of thought. Suppose that you have seen  
The well-appointed king at Hampton Pier  
Embark his royalty, and his brave fleet  
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning:  
Play with your fancies, and in them behold  
Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;  
Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give  
To sounds confused; behold the threaten sails,  
Borne with the invisible and creeping wind  
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea  
Breasting the lofty surge. O, do but think  
You stand upon the rivage and behold  
A city on the inconstant billows dancing!  
For so appears this fleet majestic,  
Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow, follow:  
Grapple your minds to sternage of this navy,  
And leave your England, as dead midnight still,  
Guarded with grandsires, babies and old women,  
Or passed or not arrived to pith and puissance;  
For who is he, whose chin is but enriched  
With one appearing hair, that will not follow  
These culled and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?  
Work, work your thoughts, and therein see a siege:  
Behold the ordnance on their carriages,  
With fatal mouths gaping on girded Harfleur.  
Suppose the ambassador from the French comes back;  
Tells Harry that the king doth offer him

Katharine his daughter, and with her to dowry  
 Some petty and unprofitable dukedoms.  
 The offer likes not: and the nimble gunner  
 With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,  
 And down goes all before them!

### THE EVE

Now entertain conjecture of a time  
 When creeping murmur and the poring dark  
 Fills the wide vessel of the universe.  
 From camp to camp through the foul womb of night  
 The hum of either army stilly sounds,  
 That the fixed sentinels almost receive  
 The secret whispers of each other's watch:  
 Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames  
 Each battle sees the other's umbered face;  
 Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs  
 Piercing the night's dull ear, and from the tents  
 The armourers, accomplishing the knights,  
 With busy hammers closing rivets up,  
 Give dreadful note of preparation.  
 The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,  
 And the third hour of drowsy morning name.  
 Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,  
 The confident and over-lusty French  
 Do the low-rated English play at dice,  
 And chide the cripple, tardy-gaited night  
 Who like a foul and ugly witch doth limp  
 So tediously away. The poor condemnèd English,  
 Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires  
 Sit patiently and inly ruminate  
 The morning's danger, and their gesture sad,  
 Investing lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats,  
 Presenteth them unto the gazing moon  
 So many horrid ghosts. O now, who will behold

The royal captain of this ruined band  
 Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,  
 Let him cry 'Praise and glory on his head!'

For forth he goes and visits all his host,  
 Bids them good-morrow with a modest smile,  
 And calls them brothers, friends, and countrymen.  
 Upon his royal face there is no note  
 How dread an army hath enrounded him;  
 Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour  
 Unto the weary and all-watchèd night,  
 But freshly looks and over-bears attain  
 With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty,  
 That every wretch, pining and pale before,  
 Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.  
 A largess universal like the sun  
 His liberal eye doth give to every one,  
 Thawing cold fear, that mean and gentle all,  
 Behold, as may unworthiness define,  
 A little touch of Harry in the night—  
 And so our scene must to the battle fly.

*Shakespeare.*

## THE BATTLE

FAIR stood the wind for France,  
 When we our sails advance,  
 Nor now to prove our chance  
     Longer will tarry;  
 But putting to the main,  
 At Caux, the mouth of Seine,  
 With all his martial train,  
     Landed King Harry.  
 And taking many a fort,  
 Furnished in warlike sort,  
 Marched towards Agincourt  
     In happy hour,

Skirmishing day by day  
 With those that stopped his way,  
 Where the French general lay  
     With all his power:

Which, in his height of pride,  
 King Henry to deride,  
 His ransom to provide  
     To the king sending;  
 Which he neglects the while  
 As from a nation vile,  
 Yet with an angry smile  
     Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,  
 Quoth our brave Henry then,  
 ‘Though they to one be ten,  
     Be not amazed.  
 Yet have we well begun,  
 Battles so bravely won  
 Have ever to the sun  
     By fame been raised.

And for myself, quoth he,  
 This my full rest shall be:  
 England ne’er mourn for me,  
     Nor more esteem me;  
 Victor I will remain  
 Or on this earth lie slain;  
 Never shall she sustain  
     Loss to redeem me.

Poitiers and Cressy tell,  
 When most their pride did swell,  
 Under our swords they fell;  
     No less our skill is

Than when our grandsire great,  
Claiming the regal seat,  
By many a warlike feat  
    Lopped the French lilies?

The Duke of York so dread  
The eager vaward led;  
With the main Henry sped,  
    Amongst his henchmen;  
Excester had the rear,  
A braver man not there:  
O Lord, how hot they were  
    On the false Frenchmen!

They now to fight are gone,  
Armour on armour shone,  
Drum now to drum did groan,  
    To hear was wonder;  
That with the cries they make  
The very earth did shake,  
Trumpet to trumpet spake,  
    Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,  
O noble Erpingham,  
Which did the signal aim  
    To our hid forces!  
When from the meadow by,  
Like a storm suddenly,  
The English archery  
    Struck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong,  
Arrows a cloth-yard long,  
That like to serpents stung,  
    Piercing the weather;

None from his fellow starts,  
But playing manly parts,  
And like true English hearts  
    Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,  
And forth their bilbos drew,  
And on the French they flew,  
    Not one was tardy;  
Arms were from shoulders sent,  
Scalps to the teeth were rent,  
Down the French peasants went;  
    Our men were hardy.

This while our noble king,  
His broadsword brandishing,  
Down the French host did ding  
    As to o'erwhelm it,  
And many a deep wound lent,  
His arms with blood besprent,  
And many a cruel dent  
    Bruisèd his helmet.

Glo'ster, that duke so good,  
Next of the royal blood,  
For famous England stood,  
    With his brave brother;  
Clarence, in steel so bright,  
Though but a maiden knight,  
Yet in that furious fight  
    Scarce such another!

Warwick in blood did wade,  
Oxford the foe invade,  
And cruel slaughter made,  
    Still as they ran up;

Suffolk his axe did ply,  
 Beaumont and Willoughby  
 Bare them right doughtily,  
     Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day  
 Fought was this noble fray,  
 Which fame did not delay,  
     To England to carry.  
 O, when shall Englishmen  
 With such acts fill a pen,  
 Or England breed again  
     Such a King Harry?

*Drayton.*

## AFTER

Now we bear the king  
 Toward Calais: grant him there; there seen,  
 Heave him away upon your wingèd thoughts  
 Athwart the sea. Behold, the English beach  
 Pales in the flood with men, with wives and boys,  
 Whose shouts and claps out-voice the deep-mouthed  
     sea,  
 Which like a mighty whiffler 'fore the king  
 Seems to prepare his way: so let him land,  
 And solemnly see him set on to London.  
 So swift a pace hath thought that even now  
 You may imagine him upon Blackheath;  
 Where that his lords desire him to have borne  
 His bruised helmet and his bended sword  
 Before him through the city: he forbids it,  
 Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride,  
 Giving full trophy, signal and ostent,  
 Quite from himself to God. But now behold,

In the quick forge and working-house of thought,  
 How London doth pour out her citizens!  
 The mayor and all his brethren in best sort,  
 Like to the senators of the antique Rome,  
 With the plebeians swarming at their heels,  
 Go forth and fetch their conquering Cæsar in!

*Shakespeare.*

## II

### LORD OF HIMSELF

How happy is he born or taught  
 Who serveth not another's will;  
 Whose armour is his honest thought,  
 And simple truth his highest skill;

Whose passions not his masters are;  
 Whose soul is still prepared for death—  
 Not tied unto the world with care  
 Of prince's ear or vulgar breath;

Who hath his ear from rumours freed;  
 Whose conscience is his strong retreat;  
 Whose state can neither flatterers feed,  
 Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who envies none whom chance doth raise,  
 Or vice; who never understood  
 How deepest wounds are given with praise,  
 Nor rules of state but rules of good;

Who God doth late and early pray  
 More of his grace than gifts to lend,  
 And entertains the harmless day  
 With a well-chosen book or friend—

This man is free from servile bands  
 Of hope to rise or fear to fall:  
 Lord of himself, though not of lands,  
 And, having nothing, yet hath all.

*Wotton.*

### III

## TRUE BALM

HIGH-SPIRITED friend,  
 I send nor balms nor corsives to your wound;  
 Your faith hath found  
 A gentler and more agile hand to tend  
 The cure of that which is but corporal,  
 And doubtful days, which were named critical,  
 Have made their fairest flight  
 And now are out of sight.  
 Yet doth some wholesome physic for the mind,  
 Wrapped in this paper lie,  
 Which in the taking if you misapply  
 You are unkind.

Your covetous hand,  
 Happy in that fair honour it hath gained,  
 Must now be reined.  
 True valour doth her own renown commend  
 In one full action; nor have you now more  
 To do than be a husband of that store.  
 Think but how dear you bought  
 This same which you have caught—  
 Such thoughts will make you more in love with truth  
 'Tis wisdom, and that high,  
 For men to use their fortune reverently,  
 Even in youth.

*Jonson.*

## IV

## HONOUR IN BUD

It is not growing like a tree  
 In bulk doth make man better be:  
     A lily of a day  
     Is fairer far in May:  
 Although it fall and die that night,  
 It was the plant and flower of light.

*Jonson.*

## V

## THE JOY OF BATTLE

ARM, arm, arm, arm! the scouts are all come in;  
 Keep your ranks close, and now your honours win.  
 Behold from yonder hill the foe appears;  
 Bows, bills, glaives, arrows, shields, and spears!  
 Like a dark wood he comes, or tempest pouring;  
 O view the wings of horse the meadows scouring!  
 The vanguard marches bravely. Hark, the drums!  
     Dub, dub!

They meet, they meet, and now the battle comes:  
     See how the arrows fly  
     That darken all the sky!  
     Hark how the trumpets sound!  
     Hark how the hills rebound—  
         Tara, tara, tara, tara, tara!

Hark how the horses charge! in, boys! boys, in!  
 The battle totters; now the wounds begin:

O how they cry!  
 O how they die!  
 Room for the valiant Memnon, armed with thunder!  
 See how he breaks the ranks asunder!  
 They fly! they fly! Eumenes has the chase,  
 And brave Polybius makes good his place:  
 To the plains, to the woods,  
 To the rocks, to the floods,  
 They fly for succour. Follow, follow, follow!  
 Hark how the soldiers hollow!

Hey, hey!

Brave Diocles is dead,  
 And all his soldiers fled;  
 The battle's won, and lost,  
 That many a life hath cost.

*Fletcher.*

## VI

# IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

MORTALITY, behold and fear!  
 What a change of flesh is here!  
 Think how many royal bones  
 Sleep beneath this heap of stones!  
 Here they lie had realms and lands,  
 Who now want strength to stir their hands.  
 Here from their pulpits sealed with dust  
 They preach, 'In greatness is no trust.'  
 Here is an acre sown indeed  
 With the richest, royall'st seed  
 That the earth did e'er suck in,  
 Since the first man died for sin.

Here the bones of birth have cried,  
 'Though gods they were, as men they died.'  
 Here are sands, ignoble things,  
 Dropt from the ruined sides of kings.  
 Here's a world of pomp and state,  
 Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

*Beaumont.*

## VII

### GOING A-MAYING

GET up, get up for shame! The blooming morn  
 Upon her wings presents the god unshorn:  
 See how Aurora throws her fair  
 Fresh-quilted colours through the air:  
 Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see  
 The dew-bespangled herb and tree!  
 Each flower has wept and bowed toward the east,  
 Above an hour since, yet you not drest,  
 Nay, not so much as out of bed?  
 When all the birds have matins said,  
 And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,  
 Nay, profanation, to keep in,  
 Whenas a thousand virgins on this day  
 Spring sooner than the lark to fetch in May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen  
 To come forth like the spring-time fresh and green,  
 And sweet as Flora. Take no care  
 For jewels for your gown or hair:  
 Fear not; the leaves will strew  
 Gems in abundance upon you:  
 Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,  
 Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.

Come, and receive them while the light  
 Hangs on the dew-locks of the night,  
 And Titan on the eastern hill  
 Retires himself, or else stands still  
 Till you come forth! Wash, dress, be brief in praying:  
 Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming, mark  
 How each field turns a street, each street a park,  
     Made green and trimmed with trees! see how  
     Devotion gives each house a bough  
     Or branch! each porch, each door, ere this,  
     An ark, a tabernacle is,  
 Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,  
 As if here were those cooler shades of love.  
     Can such delights be in the street  
     And open fields, and we not see 't?  
     Come, we'll abroad: and let's obey  
     The proclamation made for May,  
 And sin no more, as we have done, by staying,  
 But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day,  
 But is got up and gone to bring in May.  
     A deal of youth ere this is come  
     Back and with white-thorn laden home.  
     Some have despatched their cakes and cream,  
     Before that we have left to dream:  
 And some have wept and wooed, and plighted troth,  
 And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth:  
     Many a green-gown has been given,  
     Many a kiss, both odd and even:  
     Many a glance too has been sent  
     From out the eye, love's firmament:  
 Many a jest told of the keys betraying  
 This night, and locks picked: yet we're not a-Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,  
 And take the harmless folly of the time!  
     We shall grow old apace, and die  
     Before we know our liberty.  
     Our life is short, and our days run  
     As fast away as does the sun.  
 And, as a vapour or a drop of rain,  
 Once lost can ne'er be found again,  
     So when or you or I are made  
     A fable, song, or fleeting shade,  
     All love, all liking, all delight,  
     Lies drowned with us in endless night.  
 Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,  
 Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

*Herrick.*

## VIII

# TO ANTHEA

## WHO MAY COMMAND HIM ANYTHING

BID me to live, and I will live  
     Thy Protestant to be;  
 Or bid me love and I will give  
     A loving heart to thee.  
  
 A heart as soft, a heart as kind,  
     A heart as sound and free,  
 As in the whole world thou canst find,  
     That heart I'll give to thee.  
  
 Bid that heart stay, and it will stay  
     To honour thy decree;  
 Or bid it languish quite away,  
     And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep  
 While I have eyes to see;  
 And, having none, yet I will keep  
 A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair  
 Under that cypress-tree;  
 Or bid me die, and I will dare  
 E'en death to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,  
 The very eyes of me,  
 And hast command of every part,  
 To live and die for thee.

*Herrick.*

## IX

# MEMENTO MORI

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright—  
 The bridal of the earth and sky—  
 The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,  
 For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,  
 Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,  
 Thy root is ever in its grave,  
 And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,  
 A box where sweets compacted lie,  
 My music shows ye have your closes,  
 And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul  
 Like seasoned timber never gives,

But, though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives.

*Herbert.*

X

**THE KING OF KINGS**

THE glories of our birth and state  
Are shadows, not substantial things:  
There is no armour against fate:  
Death lays his icy hand on kings:  
Sceptre and crown  
Must tumble down,  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the poor crookèd scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,  
And plant fresh laurels when they kill,  
But their strong nerves at last must yield:  
They tame but one another still.  
Early or late  
They stoop to fate,  
And must give up their murmuring breath  
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on their brow—  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!  
Upon Death's purple altar now  
See where the victor-victim bleeds!  
All heads must come  
To the cold tomb:  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

*Shirley.*

## XI

## LYCIDAS

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.  
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,  
Compels me to disturb your season due:  
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:  
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew  
Himself to sing and build the lofty rhyme.  
He must not float upon his watery bier  
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin, then, sisters of the sacred well,  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string;  
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse:  
So may some gentle Muse  
With lucky words favour my destined urn,  
And, as he passes, turn  
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,  
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.  
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared  
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,  
We drove afield, and both together heard  
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,

Oft till the star that rose at evening bright  
Towards heaven's descent had sloped his  
    westering wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,  
Tempered to the oaten flute;  
Rough satyrs danced, and fauns with cloven heel  
From the glad sound would not be absent long;  
And old Damoetas loved to hear our song.

    But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone, and never must return!  
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,  
And all their echoes, mourn.

The willows and the hazel copses green  
Shall now no more be seen  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays,  
As killing as the canker to the rose,  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear  
When first the white-thorn blows,  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to Shepherds' ear.

    Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep  
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?  
For neither were ye playing on the steep  
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,  
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream:  
Ay me! I fondly dream  
'Had ye been there,' . . . for what could that have done?  
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,  
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son  
Whom universal nature did lament,  
When by the rout that made the hideous roar  
His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care  
 To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,  
 And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?  
 Were it not better done, as others use,  
 To sport with Amaryllis in the shade  
 Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?  
 Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise  
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)  
 To scorn delights and live laborious days;  
 But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
 Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,  
 And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'  
 Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:  
 'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
 Nor in the glistening foil  
 Set off to the world nor in broad rumour lies,  
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes  
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;  
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.'

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,  
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,  
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood!  
 But now my oat proceeds,  
 And listens to the Herald of the Sea  
 That came in Neptune's plea.  
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?  
 And questioned every gust of rugged wings  
 That blows from off each beakèd promontory:  
 They knew not of his story,  
 And sage Hippotades their answer brings,  
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:  
 The air was calm, and on the level brine  
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.

It was that fatal and perfidious bark,  
 Built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark,  
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,  
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,  
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge  
 Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.  
 'Ah! who hath reft,' quoth he, 'my dearest pledge?'  
 Last came, and last did go,  
 The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;  
 Two massy keys he bore of metals twain  
 (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).  
 He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:  
 'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
 Enow of such as for their bellies' sake  
 Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!  
 Of other care they little reckoning make  
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,  
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest;  
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold  
 A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least  
 That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!  
 What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;  
 And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;  
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
 But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:  
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said:  
 But that two-handed engine at the door  
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.'

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past  
 That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,  
 And call the vales, and bid them hither cast  
 Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.

Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use  
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,  
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks;  
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes  
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,  
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.  
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,  
The tufted crow-toe and pale jessamine,  
The white pink and the pansy freaked with jet,  
The glowing violet,  
The musk-rose and the well-attired woodbine,  
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:  
Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,  
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.  
For, so to interpose a little ease,  
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise;  
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas  
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;  
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;  
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,  
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,  
Where the great vision of the guarded mount  
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;  
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:  
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,  
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
 Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,  
 Where, other groves and other streams along,  
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,  
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,  
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love  
 There entertain him all the Saints above,  
 In solemn troops and sweet societies  
 That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
 And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.  
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;  
 Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore  
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
 To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
 While the still morn went out with sandals grey;  
 He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:  
 And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,  
 And now was dropt into the western bay:  
 At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue;  
 To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

*Milton.*

## XII

# ARMS AND THE MUSE

## WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED ON THE CITY

CAPTAIN, or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,  
 Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,  
 If deed of honour did thee ever please,  
 Guard them, and him within protect from harms.

He can requite thee; for he knows the charms  
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,  
And he can spread thy name o'er land and seas,  
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.  
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:  
The great Emanthian conqueror bid spare  
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower  
Went to the ground; and the repeated air  
Of sad Electra's poet had the power  
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

*Milton.*

### XIII

## TO THE LORD GENERAL

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud  
Not of war only, but detractions rude,  
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,  
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,  
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud  
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,  
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,  
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,  
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains  
To conquer still; peace hath her victories  
No less renowned than war: new foes arise,  
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.  
Help us to save free conscience from the paw  
Of hireling wolves whose gospel is their maw.

*Milton.*