

WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

SIR WALTER  
SCOTT

*Rob Roy*



*Complete and Unabridged*

# ROB ROY



Sir Walter Scott



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## CHAPTER I

How have I sinned, that this affliction  
Should light so heavy on me? I have no more sons,  
And this no more mine own. – My grand curse  
Hang o'er his head that thus transformed thee! – Travel?  
I'll send my horse to travel next.

MONSIEUR THOMAS.

YOU HAVE REQUESTED ME, my dear friend, to bestow some of that leisure, with which Providence has blessed the decline of my life, in registering the hazards and difficulties which attended its commencement. The recollection of those adventures, as you are pleased to term them, has indeed left upon my mind a chequered and varied feeling of pleasure and of pain, mingled, I trust, with no slight gratitude and veneration to the Disposer of human events, who guided my early course through much risk and labour, that the ease with which he has blessed my prolonged life, might seem softer from remembrance and contrast. Neither is it possible for me to doubt, what you have often affirmed, that the incidents which befell me among a people singularly primitive in their government and manners, have something interesting and attractive for those who love to hear an old man's stories of a past age.

Still, however, you must remember that the tale told by one friend, and listened to by another, loses half its charms when committed to paper; and that the narratives to which you have attended with interest, as heard from the voice of him to whom they occurred, will appear less deserving of attention when perused in the seclusion of your study. But your greener age and robust constitution promise longer life than will, in all human probability, be the lot of your friend. Throw, then, these sheets into some secret drawer of your escritoire till we are separated from each other's society by an event which may happen at any moment, and which must happen within the course of a few – a very few – years. When we are parted in this world, – to meet, I hope, in a better, – you will, I am well aware, cherish more than it deserves the memory of your departed friend, and will find in those details which I am now to commit to paper, matter for melancholy, but not unpleasing reflection. Others bequeath to the confidants of their bosom portraits of

their external features, – I put into your hands a faithful transcript of my thoughts and feelings, of my virtues and of my failings, with the assured hope that the follies and headstrong impetuosity of my youth will meet the same kind construction and forgiveness which have so often attended the faults of my matured age.

One advantage, among the many, of addressing my Memoirs (if I may give these sheets a name so imposing) to a dear and intimate friend, is, that I may spare some of the details, in this case unnecessary, with which I must needs have detained a stranger from what I have to say of greater interest. Why should I bestow all my tediousness upon you, because I have you in my power, and have ink, paper, and time before me? At the same time, I dare not promise that I may not abuse the opportunity so temptingly offered me, to treat of myself and my own concerns, even though I speak of circumstances as well known to you as to myself. The seductive love of narrative, when we ourselves are the heroes of the events which we tell, often disregards the attention due to the time and patience of the audience, and the best and wisest have yielded to its fascination. I need only to remind you of the singular instance evinced by the form of that rare and original edition of Sully's Memoirs, which you (with the fond vanity of a book-collector) insist upon preferring to that which is reduced to the useful and ordinary form of Memoirs, but which I think curious solely as illustrating how far so great a man as the author was accessible to the foible of self-importance. If I recollect rightly, that venerable peer and great statesman had appointed no fewer than four gentlemen of his household to draw up the events of his life, under the title of 'Memorials of the Sage and Royal Affairs of State, Domestic, Political, and Military, transacted by Henry IV.,' and so forth. These grave recorders, having made their compilation, reduced the Memoirs containing all the remarkable events of their master's life into a narrative, addressed to himself in *propria persona*. And thus, instead of telling his own story in the third person, like Julius Cæsar, or in the first person, like most who, in the hall or the study, undertake to be the heroes of their own tale, Sully enjoyed the refined, though whimsical, pleasure of having the events of his life told over to him by his secretaries, being himself the auditor, as he was also the hero, and probably the author, of the whole book. It must have been a great sight to have seen the ex-minister, as bolt upright as a starched ruff and laced cassock could make him, seated in state beneath his canopy, and listening to the recitation of his compilers, while, standing bare in his presence, they informed him gravely, 'Thus

said the duke; so did the duke infer; such were your grace's sentiments upon this important point; such were your secret counsels to the king on that other emergency,' – circumstances, all of which must have been much better known to their hearer than to themselves, and most of which could only be derived from his own special communication.

My situation is not quite so ludicrous as that of the great Sully, and yet there would be something whimsical in Frank Osbaldistone giving Will Tresham a formal account of his birth, education, and connections in the world. I will, therefore, wrestle with the tempting spirit of P. P., Clerk of our Parish, as I best may, and endeavour to tell you nothing that is familiar to you already. Some things, however, I must recall to your memory, because, though formerly well known to you, they may have been forgotten through lapse of time, and they afford the ground-work of my destiny.

You must remember my father well; for as your own was a member of the mercantile house, you knew him from infancy. Yet you hardly saw him in his best days, before age and infirmity had quenched his ardent spirit of enterprise and speculation. He would have been a poorer man, indeed, but perhaps as happy, had he devoted to the extension of science those active energies and acute powers of observation, for which commercial pursuits found occupation. Yet in the fluctuations of mercantile speculation there is something captivating to the adventurer, even independent of the hope of gain. He who embarks on that fickle sea requires to possess the skill of the pilot and the fortitude of the navigator; and after all may be wrecked and lost, unless the gales of fortune breathe in his favour. This mixture of necessary attention and inevitable hazard, – the frequent and awful uncertainty whether prudence shall overcome fortune, or fortune baffle the schemes of prudence, – affords full occupation for the powers, as well as for the feelings of the mind, and trade has all the fascination of gambling without its moral guilt.

Early in the eighteenth century, when I (Heaven help me!) was a youth of some twenty years old, I was summoned suddenly from Bourdeaux to attend my father on business of importance. I shall never forget our first interview. You recollect the brief, abrupt, and somewhat stern mode in which he was wont to communicate his pleasure to those around him. Methinks I see him even now in my mind's eye, – the firm and upright figure; the step, quick and determined; the eye, which shot so keen and so penetrating a glance; the features, on which care had already planted wrinkles, – and hear his

language, in which he never wasted word in vain, expressed in a voice which had sometimes an occasional harshness, far from the intention of the speaker.

When I dismounted from my post-horse, I hastened to my father's apartment. He was traversing it with an air of composed and steady deliberation, which even my arrival, although an only son, unseen for four years, was unable to discompose. I threw myself into his arms. He was a kind, though not a fond, father, and the tear twinkled in his dark eye; but it was only for a moment.

'Dubourg writes to me that he is satisfied with you, Frank.'

'I am happy, sir -'

'But I have less reason to be so,' he added, sitting down at his bureau.

'I am sorry, sir -'

'"Sorry" and "happy," Frank, are words that, on most occasions, signify little or nothing. Here is your last letter.'

He took it out from a number of others tied up in a parcel of red tape, and curiously labelled and filed. There lay my poor epistle, written on the subject the nearest to my heart at the time, and couched in words which I had thought would work compassion, if not conviction, - there, I say, it lay, squeezed up among the letters on miscellaneous business in which my father's daily affairs had engaged him. I cannot help smiling internally when I recollect the mixture of hurt vanity and wounded feeling with which I regarded my remonstrance, to the penning of which there had gone, I promise you, some trouble, as I beheld it extracted from amongst letters of advice, of credit, and all the commonplace lumber, as I then thought them, of a merchant's correspondence. Surely, thought I, a letter of such importance (I dared not say, even to myself, so well written) deserved a separate place, as well as more anxious consideration, than those on the ordinary business of the counting-house.

But my father did not observe my dissatisfaction, and would not have minded it if he had. He proceeded, with the letter in his hand: 'This, Frank, is yours of the 21st ultimo, in which you advise me [reading from my letter] that in the most important business of forming a plan, and adopting a profession for life, you trust my paternal goodness will hold you entitled to at least a negative voice; that you have insuperable - ay, "insuperable" is the word (I wish, by the way, you would write a more distinct current hand, - draw a score through the tops of your *t*'s, and open the loops of your *l*'s) - insuperable objections to the arrangements which I have proposed

to you. There is much more to the same effect, occupying four good pages of paper, which a little attention to perspicuity and distinctness of expression might have comprised within as many lines. For, after all, Frank, it amounts but to this, that you will not do as I would have you.'

'That I cannot, sir, in the present instance; not that I will not.'

'Words avail very little with me, young man,' said my father, whose inflexibility always possessed the air of the most perfect calmness and self-possession. '“Can not” may be a more civil phrase than “will not,” but the expressions are synonymous where there is no moral impossibility. But I am not a friend to doing business hastily; we will talk this matter over after dinner. – Owen!'

Owen appeared, not with the silver locks which you were used to venerate, for he was then little more than fifty, but he had the same, or an exactly similar, uniform suit of light brown clothes; the same pearl-grey silk stockings; the same stock, with its silver buckle; the same plaited cambric ruffles, drawn down over his knuckles in the parlour, but in the counting-house carefully folded back under the sleeves, that they might remain unstained by the ink which he daily consumed, – in a word, the same grave, formal, yet benevolent cast of features, which continued to his death to distinguish the head clerk of the great house of Osbaldistone and Tresham.

'Owen,' said my father, as the kind old man shook me affectionately by the hand, 'you must dine with us to-day, and hear the news Frank has brought us from our friends in Bourdeaux.'

Owen made one of his stiff bows of respectful gratitude; for in those days, when the distance between superiors and inferiors was enforced in a manner to which the present times are strangers, such an invitation was a favour of some little consequence.

I shall long remember that dinner-party. Deeply affected by feelings of anxiety, not unmingled with displeasure, I was unable to take that active share in the conversation which my father seemed to expect from me; and I too frequently gave unsatisfactory answers to the questions with which he assailed me. Owen, hovering betwixt his respect for his patron and his love for the youth he had dandled on his knee in childhood, like the timorous, yet anxious ally of an invaded nation, endeavoured at every blunder I made to explain my no-meaning, and to cover my retreat, – manœuvres which added to my father's pettish displeasure, and brought a share of it upon my kind advocate, instead of protecting me. I had not, while residing in the house of Dubourg, absolutely conducted myself like –



A clerk condemned his father's soul to cross,  
Who penned a stanza when he should engross, —

but, to say truth, I had frequented the counting-house no more than I had thought absolutely necessary to secure the good report of the Frenchman, long a correspondent of our firm, to whom my father had trusted for initiating me into the mysteries of commerce. In fact, my principal attention had been dedicated to literature and manly exercises. My father did not altogether discourage such acquirements, whether mental or personal. He had too much good sense not to perceive that they sate gracefully upon every man, and he was sensible that they relieved and dignified the character to which he wished me to aspire. But his chief ambition was that I should succeed, not merely to his fortune, but to the views and plans by which he imagined he could extend and perpetuate the wealthy inheritance which he designed for me.

Love of his profession was the motive which he chose should be most ostensible, when he urged me to tread the same path; but he had others with which I only became acquainted at a later period. Impetuous in his schemes, as well as skilful and daring, each new adventure, when successful, became at once the incentive, and furnished the means, for further speculation. It seemed to be necessary to him, as to an ambitious conqueror, to push on from achievement to achievement, without stopping to secure, far less to enjoy, the acquisitions which he made. Accustomed to see his whole fortune trembling in the scales of chance, and dexterous at adopting expedients for casting the balance in his favour, his health and spirits and activity seemed ever to increase with the animating hazards on which he staked his wealth; and he resembled a sailor, accustomed to brave the billows and the foe, whose confidence rises on the eve of tempest or of battle. He was not, however, insensible to the changes which increasing age or supervening malady might make in his own constitution, and was anxious in good time to secure in me an assistant who might take the helm when his hand grew weary, and keep the vessel's way according to his counsel and instruction. Paternal affection, as well as the furtherance of his own plans, determined him to the same conclusion. Your father, though his fortune was vested in the house, was only a sleeping partner, as the commercial phrase goes; and Owen, whose probity and skill in the details of arithmetic rendered his services invaluable as a head clerk, was not possessed either of information or talents sufficient to conduct the mysteries of the principal management. If my father were

suddenly summoned from life, what would become of the world of schemes which he had formed unless his son were moulded into a commercial Hercules fit to sustain the weight when relinquished by the falling Atlas? and what would become of that son himself, if, a stranger to business of this description, he found himself at once involved in the labyrinth of mercantile concerns, without the clue of knowledge necessary for his extraction? For all these reasons, avowed and secret, my father was determined I should embrace his profession; and when he was determined, the resolution of no man was more immovable. I, however, was also a party to be consulted, and, with something of his own pertinacity, I had formed a determination precisely contrary.

It may, I hope, be some palliative for the resistance which, on this occasion, I offered to my father's wishes, that I did not fully understand upon what they were founded, or how deeply his happiness was involved in them. Imagining myself certain of a large succession in future, and ample maintenance in the mean while, it never occurred to me that it might be necessary, in order to secure these blessings, to submit to labour and limitations unpleasant to my taste and temper. I only saw in my father's proposal for my engaging in business, a desire that I should add to those heaps of wealth which he had himself acquired; and imagining myself the best judge of the path to my own happiness, I did not conceive that I should increase that happiness by augmenting a fortune which I believed was already sufficient, and more than sufficient, for every use, comfort, and elegant enjoyment.

Accordingly, I am compelled to repeat that my time at Bourdeaux had not been spent as my father had proposed to himself. What he considered as the chief end of my residence in that city, I had postponed for every other, and would (had I dared) have neglected it altogether. Dubourg, a favoured and benefited correspondent of our mercantile house, was too much of a shrewd politician to make such reports to the head of the firm concerning his only child as would excite the displeasure of both; and he might also, as you will presently hear, have views of selfish advantage in suffering me to neglect the purposes for which I was placed under his charge. My conduct was regulated by the bounds of decency and good order, and thus far he had no evil report to make, supposing him so disposed; but perhaps the crafty Frenchman would have been equally complaisant, had I been in the habit of indulging worse feelings than those of indolence and aversion to mercantile business. As it was, while I gave a decent portion of my time to the commercial

studies he recommended, he was by no means envious of the hours which I dedicated to other and more classical attainments, nor did he ever find fault with me for dwelling upon Corneille and Boileau, in preference to Postlethwayte (supposing his folio to have then existed, and Monsieur Dubourg able to have pronounced his name), or Savary, or any other writer on commercial economy. He had picked up somewhere a convenient expression, with which he rounded off every letter to his correspondent, – ‘I was all,’ he said, ‘that a father could wish.’

My father never quarrelled with a phrase, however frequently repeated, provided it seemed to him distinct and expressive; and Addison himself could not have found expressions so satisfactory to him as, ‘Yours received, and duly honoured the bills enclosed, as per margin.’

Knowing, therefore, very well what he desired me to be, Mr. Osbaldistone made no doubt, from the frequent repetition of Dubourg’s favourite phrase, that I was the very thing he wished to see me, when, in an evil hour, he received my letter containing my eloquent and detailed apology for declining a place in the firm, and a desk and stool in the corner of the dark counting-house in Crane Alley, surmounting in height those of Owen and the other clerks, and only inferior to the tripod of my father himself. All was wrong from that moment. Dubourg’s reports became as suspicious as if his bills had been noted for dishonour. I was summoned home in all haste, and received in the manner I have already communicated to you.

## CHAPTER II

I begin shrewdly to suspect the young man of a terrible taint, – Poetry; with which idle disease if he be infected, there's no hope of him in a state course. *Actum est* of him for a commonwealth's man, if he go to 't in rhyme once.

BEN JONSON: *Bartholomew Fair*.

MY FATHER HAD, GENERALLY SPEAKING, his temper under complete self-command, and his anger rarely indicated itself by words, except in a sort of dry, testy manner, to those who had displeased him. He never used threats or expressions of loud resentment. All was arranged with him on system, and it was his practice to do 'the needful' on every occasion without wasting words about it. It was, therefore, with a bitter smile that he listened to my imperfect answers concerning the state of commerce in France and unmercifully permitted me to involve myself deeper and deeper in the mysteries of *agio*, tariffs tare and tret; nor can I charge my memory with his having looked positively angry, until he found me unable to explain the exact effect which the depreciation of the *louis d'or* had produced on the negotiation of bills of exchange. 'The most remarkable national occurrence in my time,' said my father (who nevertheless had seen the Revolution), 'and he knows no more of it than a post on the quay!'

'Mr. Francis,' suggested Owen, in his timid and conciliatory manner, 'cannot have forgotten that by an *arret* of the king of France, dated 1st May, 1700, it was provided that the *porteur*, within ten days after due, must make demand –'

'Mr. Francis,' said my father, interrupting him, 'will, I dare say, recollect for the moment anything you are so kind as hint to him. – But, body o' me! how Dubourg could permit him! – Hark ye, Owen. what sort of a youth is Clement Dubourg, his nephew there, in the office, the black-haired lad?'

'One of the cleverest clerks, sir, in the house, – a prodigious young man for his time,' answered Owen; for the gaiety and civility of the young Frenchman had won his heart.

'Ay, ay, I suppose *he* knows something of the nature of exchange. Dubourg was determined I should have one youngster at least about my hand who understood business; but I see his drift, and he shall

find that I do so when he looks at the balance-sheet. Owen, let Clement's salary be paid up to next quarter-day, and let him ship himself back to Bourdeaux in his father's ship, which is clearing out yonder.'

'Dismiss Clement Dubourg, sir?' said Owen, with a faltering voice.

'Yes, sir, dismiss him instantly; it is enough to have a stupid Englishman in the counting-house to make blunders, without keeping a sharp Frenchman there to profit by them.'

I had lived long enough in the territories of the *Grand Monarque* to contract a hearty aversion to arbitrary exertion of authority, even if it had not been instilled into me with my earliest breeding; and I could not refrain from interposing, to prevent an innocent and meritorious young man from paying the penalty of having acquired that proficiency which my father had desired for me.

'I beg pardon, sir,' when Mr. Osbaldistone had done speaking, 'but I think it but just that if I have been negligent of my studies, I should pay the forfeit myself. I have no reason to charge Monsieur Dubourg with having neglected to give me opportunities of improvement, however little I may have profited by them; and with respect to Monsieur Clement Dubourg—'

'With respect to him, and to you, I shall take the measures which I see needful,' replied my father; 'but it is fair in you, Frank, to take your own blame on your own shoulders, — very fair, that cannot be denied. — I cannot acquit old Dubourg,' he said, looking to Owen, 'for having merely afforded Frank the means of useful knowledge, without either seeing that he took advantage of them, or reporting to me if he did not. You see, Owen, he has natural notions of equity becoming a British merchant.'

'Mr. Francis,' said the head clerk, with his usual formal inclination of the head, and a slight elevation of his right hand, which he had acquired by a habit of sticking his pen behind his ear before he spoke, — 'Mr. Francis seems to understand the fundamental principle of all moral accounting, the great ethic rule of three. Let A do to B as he would have B do to him; the product will give the rule of conduct required.'

My father smiled at this reduction of the golden rule to arithmetical form, but instantly proceeded:

'All this signifies nothing, Frank; you have been throwing away your time like a boy, and in future you must learn to live like a man. I shall put you under Owen's care for a few months, to recover the lost ground.'

I was about to reply, but Owen looked at me with such a supplicatory and warning gesture that I was involuntarily silent.

'We will then,' continued my father, 'resume the subject of mine of the 1st ultimo, to which you sent me an answer which was unadvised and unsatisfactory. So now, fill your glass, and push the bottle to Owen.'

Want of courage – of audacity, if you will – was never my failing. I answered firmly, 'I was sorry that my letter was unsatisfactory, – unadvised it was not; for I had given the proposal his goodness had made me my instant and anxious attention, and it was with no small pain that I found myself obliged to decline it.'

My father bent his keen eye for a moment on me, and instantly withdrew it. As he made no answer, I thought myself obliged to proceed, though with some hesitation, and he only interrupted me by monosyllables.

'It is impossible, sir, for me to have higher respect for any character than I have for the commercial, even were it not yours.'

'Indeed!'

'It connects nation with nation, relieves the wants and contributes to the wealth of all, and is to the general commonwealth of the civilised world what the daily intercourse of ordinary life is to private society, or rather, what air and food are to our bodies.'

'Well, sir?'

'And yet, sir, I find myself compelled to persist in declining to adopt a character which I am so ill qualified to support.'

'I will take care that you acquire the qualifications necessary. You are no longer the guest and pupil of Dubourg.'

'But, my dear sir, it is no defect of teaching which I plead, but my own inability to profit by instruction.'

'Nonsense; have you kept your journal in the terms I desired?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Be pleased to bring it here.'

The volume thus required was a sort of commonplace book, kept by my father's recommendation, in which I had been directed to enter notes of the miscellaneous information which I had acquired in the course of my studies. Foreseeing that he would demand inspection of this record, I had been attentive to transcribe such particulars of information as he would most likely be pleased with; but too often the pen had discharged the task without much correspondence with the head. And it had also happened that, the book being the receptacle nearest to my hand, I had occasionally jotted down memoranda which had little regard to traffic. I now put it into

my father's hand, devoutly hoping he might light on nothing that would increase his displeasure against me. Owen's face, which had looked something blank when the question was put, cleared up at my ready answer, and wore a smile of hope when I brought from my apartment, and placed before my father, a commercial-looking volume rather broader than it was long, having brazen clasps and a binding of rough calf. This looked business-like, and was encouraging to my benevolent well-wisher. But he actually smiled with pleasure as he heard my father run over some part of the contents, muttering his critical remarks as he went on: –

*'Brandies – Barils and barricants, also tonneaux. – At Nantz 29 – Velles to the barique at Cognac and Rochelle 27 – at Bourdeaux 32. – Very right, Frank. – Duties on tonnage and custom-house, see Saxby's Tables. – That's not well; you should have transcribed the passage, – it fixes the thing in the memory. – Reports outward and inward – Corn debentures – Over-sea Cockets – Linens – Isingham – Gentish – Stock-fish – Titling – Cropling – Lub-fish. – You should have noted that they are all, nevertheless, to be entered as titlings. How many inches long is a titling?'*

Owen, seeing me at fault, hazarded a whisper, of which I fortunately caught the import.

*'Eighteen inches, sir –'*

*'And a lub-fish is twenty-four, – very right. It is important to remember this, on account of the Portuguese trade. – But what have we here? – Bourdeaux founded in the year – Castle of the Trompette – Palace of Gallienus. – Well, well, that's very right too. – This is a kind of waste-book, Owen, in which all the transactions of the day, – emptions, orders, payments, receipts, acceptances, draughts, commissions, and advices, – are entered miscellaneously.'*

*'That they may be regularly transferred to the day-book and ledger,'* answered Owen; *'I am glad Mr. Francis is so methodical.'*

I perceived myself getting so fast into favour that I began to fear the consequence would be my father's more obstinate perseverance in his resolution that I must become a merchant; and as I was determined on the contrary, I began to wish I had not, to use my friend Mr. Owen's phrase, been so methodical. But I had no reason for apprehension on that score; for a blotted piece of paper dropped out of the book, and, being taken up by my father, he interrupted a hint from Owen, on the propriety of securing loose memoranda with a little paste, by exclaiming, *'To the memory of Edward the Black Prince.'* What's all this? – Verses! By Heaven, Frank, you are a greater blockhead than I supposed you!

My father, you must recollect, as a man of business, looked upon the labour of poets with contempt; and as a religious man, and of the dissenting persuasion, he considered all such pursuits as equally trivial and profane. Before you condemn him, you must recall to remembrance how too many of the poets in the end of the seventeenth century had led their lives and employed their talents. The sect also to which my father belonged, felt, or perhaps affected, a puritanical aversion to the lighter exertions of literature. So that many causes contributed to augment the unpleasant surprise occasioned by the ill-timed discovery of this unfortunate copy of verses. As for poor Owen, could the bob-wig which he then wore have uncurled itself, and stood on end with horror, I am convinced the morning's labour of the friseur would have been undone, merely by the excess of his astonishment at this enormity. An inroad on the strong-box, or an erasure in the ledger, or a missummation in a fitted account, could hardly have surprised him more disagreeably. My father read the lines sometimes with an affectation of not being able to understand the sense; sometimes in a mouthing tone of mock heroic; always with an emphasis of the most bitter irony, most irritating to the nerves of an author: —

“Oh for the voice of that wild horn,  
On Fontarabian echoes borne,  
The dying hero's call,  
That told imperial Charlemagne  
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain  
Had wrought his champion's fall.”

‘*Fontarabian echoes!*’ continued my father, interrupting himself, ‘the Fontarabian Fair would have been more to the purpose. — *Paynim?* — What’s Paynim? Could you not say Pagan as well, and write English, at least, if you must needs write nonsense?’

‘Sad over earth and ocean sounding,  
And England's distant cliffs astounding,  
Such are the notes should say  
How Britain's hope, and France's fear,  
Victor of Cressy and Poitier,  
In Bourdeaux dying lay.

‘*Poitiers*, by the way, is always spelt with an s; and I know no reason why orthography should give place to rhyme.



‘“Raise my faint head, my squires,” he said,  
 “And let the casement be displayed,  
     That I may see once more  
 The splendour of the setting sun  
 Gleam on thy mirrored wave, Garonne,  
     And Blaye’s empurpled shore.”

‘*Garonne* and *sun* is a bad rhyme. Why, Frank, you do not even understand the beggarly trade you have chosen.

‘“Like me, he sinks to Glory’s sleep  
 His fall the dews of evening steep,  
     As if in sorrow shed.  
 So soft shall fall the trickling tear  
 When England’s maids and matrons hear  
     Of their Black Edward dead.

‘“And though my sun of glory set,  
 Nor France nor England shall forget  
     The terror of my name;  
 And oft shall Britain’s heroes rise,  
 New planets in these southern skies,  
     Through clouds of blood and flame.”

‘A cloud of flame is something new. Good-morrow, my masters all, and a merry Christmas to you! Why, the bellman writes better lines.’ He then tossed the paper from him with an air of superlative contempt, and concluded, ‘Upon my credit, Frank, you are a greater blockhead than I took you for.’

What could I say, my dear Tresham? There I stood, swelling with indignant mortification, while my father regarded me with a calm but stern look of scorn and pity; and poor Owen, with uplifted hands and eyes, looked as striking a picture of horror as if he had just read his patron’s name in the Gazette. At length I took courage to speak, endeavouring that my tone of voice should betray my feelings as little as possible:—

‘I am quite aware, sir, how ill qualified I am to play the conspicuous part in society you have destined for me; and, luckily, I am not ambitious of the wealth I might acquire. Mr. Owen would be a much more effective assistant.’ I said this in some malice, for I considered Owen as having deserted my cause a little too soon.

‘Owen?’ said my father. ‘The boy is mad, actually insane. And