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Drawn & Engr'd by W. L. Lewis

THE FREIRS OF BERWICK

Ane knedding troche, that lay intill ane make
 Wald hald ane boll of flour quhen that scho bak,
 Right intill it scho gart him creip in by
 And bad him lurk thair verry quyetly.

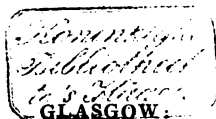
POPULAR BALLADS

AND

Legendary Tales,

SELECTED FROM THE MOST EMINENT WRITERS,

ANCIENT AND MODERN.



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INTRODUCTION.

In the very early stages of civilization, as well as in the ages of the world beyond the earliest memorial of uninspired history, Poetry appears destitute both of rhythm and rhyme. The most unmeasured of the prophecies of the Old Testament and the public speeches of the American Indians strike the ear as a species of artless yet majestic poetry. But there was exhibited a display of a more exalted character, when the holy seer took up his parable. Then the tongue, shaken free of the trammels of ordinary discourse, allowed the mind to soar away on the wings of the true sublime. The impassioned lyric lay was thrown off with the greatest rapidity in all the profusion of figures afforded by the ancient, energetic, and dark language of parable. In these compositions there is evidently a kind of measure ; but, like that of Pindar, it is very irregular. On some marbles, the relicts of Hetruscan lore, the antiquarian recognises a very simple species of poetry, which is not unlike these lyrics in their irregular structure. It appears to stand in the same relation to the productions of Plautus, as the ballads do to those of Shakespeare. It exhibits the same simplicity as ballad poetry, the same superstition. Poetry appears to have worn this loose natural garb till it was changed, in the south of Europe,

among the Greeks and Romans, for more artificial measures ; and for rhymes, among the nations of the north. This, in one view was a great improvement : the memory being able to get and to keep a better hold of the matter, rendered poetry a still more secure vehicle of oral tradition ; and serves to explain how wonderfully tradition discharged the duty of the more efficient and less mutable means of communication, used by a richer and more civilized people—how several fragments of the affairs of forgotten ages over-lived the vigour of the language to whose charge they had been committed. Among the Greeks and Romans popular traditional poetry appears to have been always neglected by the poets of education, who, though they must have felt the coldness that succeeded the fire of the discarded system, were not relieved from the difficulty of speaking the language of nature in their artificial Hexameters. They, therefore, laid down the sublime strains of the ancient poetry as their model, and resolved that if they could not easily imbibe or retain the *spirit*, they might walk according to the *art*. Thus a deplorable drawback was effected on the improvements formerly made, the more to be deplored as the state of society had so far changed, that the necessity for oral tradition was every day on the decrease. The adopting of the highly figurative language of their models rendered the bearing of their subjects distorted and lame : and their auditors or readers either believed their strong language to be literal ; or, unaffected by the strain, coolly bandied about the

words "poetic fiction," "the licence of poets." The lofty parable, the abrupt personification, the strong hyperbole, that flashed on every side from the feet of the ancient unbridled and winged Pegasus were no fictions.—All was true, consistent, and natural.

It is on this account, I believe, that every unsophisticated taste pronounces the prayers of the pious Eneas, to be nothing less than a contrast to those of David or Habakkuk. How were the poets to extricate themselves from the difficulty—or rather how did they do it—now that they found the profane rabble either believing for real, or laughing at, their *fables*? Why, they polished away to a great degree the ornaments of the art, and the watchword became "*Nec Deus intersit.*" Whether Scandinavian and German song underwent the same or similar changes about this period, it is impossible to determine. One thing is certain, that the most ancient pieces transmitted to us show it to have been affected with an unnatural degree of sterility.* Although in this feature it bears such a resemblance to the poetry of the Greeks and Romans as to give occasion to their being classed together, and contrasted with that of the orientals, it has an aspect decidedly different from that of either. It bore a much superior character for truth—still continued to present the metrical chronicles of real history; and although

* The poems of Ossian do not come within the sphere of this observation, for they being Celtic must have been written in the ancient unfettered verse.

deeply tinged with superstition, it made no pretensions whatever to fictitious ornament.

After the Roman world had long been convulsed and began to raise her head and be sensible of her prostrate condition, her laws and her language, her luxury and her learning, were alike despised by her savage conquerors—nothing was respected except her religion. But, it is not to be supposed that in taking on the yoke of Christianity, these barbarians were required to lay aside entirely their heathenism. No, the policy of the Romish clergy, in its eagerness to make converts, indulged them in ten thousand of their ancient superstitions—superstitions, which, interwoven with their Christian creed, are still to be seen in their works to this day. The Normans, who in later times unhinged the social quiet of their southern brethren, may be understood to have carried with them all the ardent love which their forefathers displayed for song and story: and Normandy was celebrated as a country where in after days, a *chanson* or *fable* might liquidate the reckoning of the traveler.

“ In Normandy, a song or tale
Is current coin for wine or ale ;
Nor does the friendly host require
For bed and board a better hire.” *

It is highly probable that little change happened to their songs or the manners of their bards till after the period of the first crusades, when a taste for learning and improvement began to be felt. The minds of the crusaders frenzied with the ardour inspired by such an enterprise, and slightly

* Sacristan of Clugny.

tinged with oriental feelings and opinions, their return operated powerfully on the public mind of the West. There arose, at this period, whatever might be the cause of it, a leaning to more polished versification, and more striking incident, a more dramatic cast of character and a taste for the sublime.

I have often thought it probable, that the Gothic conquerors of south-western Europe had been regularly supplied with bards till about the time of the crusades, from the northern seats of their fathers; as the English bards were all of the 'north countrie,' that part of the island where the ancient customs longer prevailed: and that, as the Romance or mixed tongue of France, Spain, and Italy was distinguished from its two originals the Latin and Gothic, so the romance compositions might be of that tongue in opposition to the old northern lays and legends of the bards, especially as they by this time must have been getting obsolete and unintelligible. This view of the matter is favoured by the fact, that a new school of bards arose, at this period, in Provence—the Troubadours, who, in their peregrinations through the crusading countries, carried the earliest intelligence of the heroic achievements of the cross, and the disasters of the Paynim foe. We have also a proof in this fact, that the early romantic ballad was distinguished in Britain from its ruder rival by the former always appearing in the French tongue. Whether, then, the language and manners of the ancient bards had not kept pace with those of their auditories, and yielded to a native school

of French bards, or whether the changing taste of the popular poets was believed to be tending to that of the Roman authors, certain it is, that a new species of ballad arose, which was distinguished by the name of *Romauns* or Romance, that is, Romanish, whilst the old was known by the name of *Gest* or History. "That the romance of chivalry was the legitimate descendent of the heroic ballad, appears sufficiently obvious from this single fact, that the taste for enjoying, and of course producing, these fictitious narratives, broke out in each country in Europe, as it successively arrived at that point of refinement, which required mental excitement to cherish and keep in activity its warlike and chivalrous propensities. The heroes whom the Minstrels chose for their versifications, were uniformly selected from those worthies of antiquity, whose names and famous actions, the traditions and ancient songs of the land, still kept in remembrance. These again were occasionally supplanted by others, who flourished in more recent times, and even contemporary warriors at last came in for their share of adulation, and of that glory with which the muse can arrest and halo an otherwise fleeting name."*

From the time of the Reformation, the influence of Ballad poetry, which had been silently yielding before, began suddenly to decline. The touching records of the doughty deeds of former generations, mellowed by all the prejudices of

* Motherwell's *Minstrelsy*, p. xxxv.

patriotic and antiquarian fondness, and hallowed by the swell of a fine voice, or the charm of the harp of yore, could no longer fascinate the peasant group around the winter hearth. They might beguile an idle or a weary hour, but their chief charm was gone. Their influence, indeed, was not all on a sudden extinguished. In some remote and pastoral districts it was but slowly and gradually undermined. Henceforth, however, the pulpit became the prime director of public spirit, and that to such an effect as to shake and overturn many refractory thrones.

In the present age, the popular poetry had become so unpopular, that the most precious opportunities of committing it to the custody of the *press* were very much neglected, till Sir Walter Scott turned his attention to the task, and led the way to a few other men of talent. But amateurs have been furnished with a rich treat in many excellent imitations: and in compiling this little work, I have so far consulted the general taste of the day as to serve up these in the first place, though many of them were not so choice as imitations as in their own intrinsic excellence. I have given but a few of the more interesting of the antique. A few pieces have been admitted which may be deemed not to come under the title of "Ballad," or "Legendary Tale," but being few and of merit—having more of the *spirit* of Ballad poetry than the *form*—the reader, it is hoped, will relish them as he would a bunch of white grapes in a cluster of the red.

THE FREEBOOTER.

HIGH on a rock, embower'd in wood,
 In ancient days a castle stood ;
 Its towers, when driving in the vale,
 The post-boy shew'd me with his hand :
 " Those were the terrors of the land,"
 He said and thus began his tale :

With knowing look, he, nodding, said,
 " The treasure in that rock that's laid,
 To grant to me, were heaven willing.
 I'd tell the king, sir, in a trice,
 ' Pray on your kingdom set a price ;
 I'd not be driving for a shilling.'

Of many a one, as I am told,
 The mouth has water'd for this gold ;
 But Christ have mercy, Heaven befriend !
 A coal-black hound, with iron jaws,
 With eyes of fire, and monstrous claws,
 Has brought them to untimely end.

" Once only ev'ry seven years,
 On christmas-eve, a flame appears :
 With hollow groans, and rustling wind,
 The treasure rises from the ground,
 Watch'd by black goat instead of hound ;
 And that's the time to lay the fiend.

" If from this goat, mark well the snare,
 You do not pluck one milk-white hair,
 (Ever such the ways of evil !)
 Headlong you're tumbled down the rock.
 Your body's mangled with the shock,
 Your soul is hurried to the devil.

“ From Old Nick’s wiles deliver me!
 From lords and law, pray keep me free!
 With neither will I have to do.
 By no agreement think to win;
 Spite of all clause, they’ll take you in;
 They’ll read it X instead of U.

“ Treasure-digging and Lottery,
 Fortune-hunting and Alchymy,
 Lead only to despair and strife:
 My saying is this,—rise early,
 Work steady, and live orderly,
 And Heaven above will bless your life.

“ A baron grim, grown old in crimes,”
 The post-boy said, “ in former times
 Within those walls conceal’d his gold;
 With horse, and foot, and warlike car,
 Ravag’d the country near and far
 And brought his plunder to this hold.

To ravage, murder, rob, or burn,
 Afforded joy to him in turn;
 Threats he fear’d not, sword, or halter:
 Was ought to get, dash in a crack
 He had it, and as snug was back
 In den as strong as Gibraltar.

Such fright prevail’d in neighb’ring town,
 The men scarce call’d their souls their own,
 His name drove women into fits:
 Justices weigh and plan in vain,
 Consult, resolve, and plan again;
 They counsel’d till they lost their wits.

A hag was ta’en, a lump of sins,
 She made the childern swallow pins,
 Dry’d cows, and play’d such devil’s tricks:
 Jack Ketch, as valet to this witch,
 Had laid her nicely dress’d in pitch,
 On couch of faggot and of sticks.

‘ Hold,’ she cried, ‘ dont put the fire on:
 Down I’ll fetch the grim old baron!’
 The mayor agreed, had her unbound,

Promis'd a patent free from harm,
To conjure, use her spells, and charm,
And safely witch the land around.

Such bargain seems a foolish thing,
Such as to us no gain would bring,
But Satan's friends ne'er act as one ;
From broils of rogues good will ensue,
This hell-hound to her word prov'd true ;
What she agreed was fairly done.

Chang'd to a toad at time of rest,
She crawl'd up to the robber's nest,
(By hocus pocus she'd this knack),
Of his best steed then took the form ;
And when the cock crow'd in the morn,
Full-arm'd he vaulted on her back.

With thund'ring course now flew our witch,
O'er rocks and walls, o'er hedge and ditch ;
The baron pull'd till black in face,
And curs'd, and kick'd ; but all in vain,
She heeded neither spurs nor rein,
Nor stopp'd till in the market-place.

With scrapes and sneers he's handed down ;
Your Lordship's welcome to our town ;
Good quarters are prepar'd for you :
Every dog, Sir, has his day ;
Your courtesy we'll now repay ;
Our hangman will the honours do.

Soon the rogue was brought to trial ;
Facts were prov'd beyond denial ;
In iron cage he was confin'd.
Lest at morn he should be sick,
They daily gave him an emetic ;
And then he with Duke Humphry din'd.

The hangman, vers'd in deeds of blood,
With hellish torment, cut for food
Limbs from off this famish'd sinner.
And when he'd eaten the last stump,
They broil'd his stomach and his rump,
And serv'd them up to dinner.

And when he'd eat himself all up,
 And nought remain'd to dine or sup,
 The devil took his soul away.
 Great was the triumph of the town !
 In this Court-hall the truth's well known,
 The cage hangs up unto this day.

This cage, Sir, often brings to mind
 Those dealers in the human kind ;"
 (Thus my driver's story ended) :
 Were they shut in't, and taught to feel
 Mis'ries they on the world entail,
 Their manners might be mended."

Scarce had the lad his hist'ry done,
 When up came Monsieur San Facon
 And stops our carriage, bids us rise,—
 Tumbles all our luggage over ;
 Lur'd with hopes that he'd discover
 Something that had not paid th' excise.

FROM THE GERMAN OF BURGER:

THE LASS OF FAIR WONE.

BESIDE the parson's bower of yew,
Why strays a troubled spright,
That peaks and pines, and dimly shines,
Through curtains of the night?

Why steals along the pond of toads,
A gliding fire so blue,
That lights a spot where grows no grass,
Where falls no rain nor dew?

The parson's daughter once was good,
And gentle as the dove,
And young and fair—and many came
To win the damsel's love.

High o'er the hamlet, from the hill,
Beyond the winding stream,
The windows of a stately house,
In sheen of evening, gleam.

There dwelt in riot, rout, and roar,
A lord so frank and free,
That oft with inward joy of heart
The maid beheld his glee—

Whether he met the dawning day,
 In hunting trim so fine,
 Or tapers, sparkling from his hall,
 Beshone the midnight wine.

He sent the maid his picture, girt
 With diamond, pearl, and gold ;
 And silken paper, sweet with musk,
 This gentle message told :

"Let go thy sweethearts, one and all ;
 Shalt thou be basely woo'd,
 That worthy art to gain the heart
 Of youths of noble blood ?

The tale I would to thee bewray ;
 In secret must be said ;
 At midnight hour I'll seek thy bower ;
 Fair lass, be not afraid.

And when the amorous nightingale
 Sings sweetly to his mate,
 I'll pipe my quail-call from the field :
 Be kind, nor make me wait."

In cap and mantle clad he came,
 At night, with lonely tread ;
 Unseen, and silent as a mist,
 And hush'd the dogs with bread.

And when the amorous nightingale
 Sung sweetly to his mate,
 She heard his quail-call in the field,
 And ah ! ne'er made him wait.

The words he whisper'd were so soft,
 They won her ear and heart :
 How soon will she who loves believe !
 How deep a lover's art !

No lure, no soothing guise, he spar'd,
 To banish virtuous shame ;
 He call'd on holy God above,
 As witness to his flame.

He clasp'd her to his breast, and swore
 To be for ever true :

"O yield thee to my wishful arms,
 Thy choice thou shalt not rue."

And while she strove, he drew her on,
 And led her to the bower
 So still, so dim—and round about
 Sweet smelt the beans in flower—
 There beat her heart, and heav'd her breast,
 And pleaded every sense ;
 And there the glowing breath of lust,
 Did blast her innocence.
 But when the fragrant beans began
 Their fallow blooms to shed,
 Her sparkling eyes their lustre lost ;
 Her cheek its roses fled :
 And when she saw the pods increase,
 The ruddier cherries stain,
 She felt her silken robe grow tight,
 Her waist new weight sustain.
 And when the mowers went afield,
 The yellow corn to ted,
 She felt her burthen stir within,
 And shook with tender dread.
 And when the winds of autumn hist
 Along the stubble field,
 Then could the damsel's piteous plight
 No longer be conceal'd.
 Her sire, a harsh and angry man,
 With furious voice revil'd :
 "Hence from my sight ! I'll none of thee—
 I'll harbour not thy child."
 And fast, amid her fluttering hair,
 With clenched fist he gripes,
 And seiz'd a leather thong, and lash'd
 Her sides with sounding stripes.
 Her lily skin, so soft and white,
 He ribb'd with bloody weales ;
 And thrust her out, though dark the night,
 Though sleet and storm assails.
 Up the harsh rock, on flinty paths,
 The maiden had to roam ;
 On tottering feet she grop'd her way,
 And sought her lover's home.

"A mother thou hast made of me,
 Before thou mad'st a wife :
 For this, upon my tender breast,
 These livid stripes are rife :
 Behold"—and then, with bitter sobs,
 She sank upon the floor——
 "Make good the evil thou hast wrought ;
 My injur'd name restore."
 "Poor soul! I'll have thee hous'd and nurs'd ;
 Thy terrors I lament.
 Stay here ; we'll have some farther talk—
 'The old one shall repent.—"
 "I have no time to rest and wait ;
 That saves not my good name :
 If thou with honest soul hast sworn,
 O leave me not to shame !
 But at the holy altar be
 Our union sanctify'd ;
 Before the people and the priest,
 Receive me for thy bride."
 "Unequal matches must not blot
 The honours of my line :
 Art thou of wealth of rank for me,
 To harbour thee as mine ?
 What's fit and fair I'll do for thee
 Shalt yet retain my love—
 Shalt wed my huntsman—and we'll then
 Our former transport prove."
 "Thy wicked soul, hard-hearted man,
 May pangs in hell await !
 Sure if not suited for thy bride,
 I was not for thy mate.
 Go, seek a spouse of nobler blood,
 Nor God's just judgments dread—
 So shall, e're long, some base-born wretch
 Defile thy marriage bed.
 Then, traitor, feel how wretched they
 In hopeless shame immerst :
 Then smite thy forehead on the wall,
 While horrid curses burst.

Roll thy dry eyes in wild despair—
 Unsooth'd thy grinning woe :
 Through thy pale temples fire the ball,
 And sink to fiends below."

Collecting then, she started up,
 And, through the hissing sleet.
 Through thorn and brier, through flood and mire,
 She fled with bleeding feet.

"Where now," she cried, "my gracious God!
 What refuge have I left!"
 And reach'd the garden of her home,
 Of hope in man bereft.

On hand and foot she feebly crawl'd
 Beneath the bower unblest ;
 Where withering leaves and gathering snow
 Prepar'd her only rest.

There rending pains and darting throes
 Assail'd her shuddering frame ;
 And from her womb a lovely boy,
 With wail and weeping came.

Forth from her hair a silver pin
 With hasty hands she drew,
 And prest against its tender heart,
 And the sweet babe she slew,

Erst when the act of blood was done,
 Her soul in guilt abhorr'd .

"My Jesus ! what has been my deed ?
 Have mercy on me, Lord !"

With bloody nails beside the pond,
 Its shallow grave she tore :
 There rest in God ; there shame and want ;
 Thou canst not suffer more :

Me, vengeance waits. My poor, poor child,
 Thy wound shall bleed afresh,
 When ravens from the gallows tear
 Thy mother's mould'ring flesh."

Hard by the bower her gibbet stands ;
 Her skull is still to show ;
 It seems to eye the barren grave
 Three spans in length below.—

That is the spot where grows no grass,
 Where falls no rain or dew :
 Whence steals along the pond of toads
 A hovering fire so blue.

And nightly, when the ravens come,
 Her ghost is seen to glide ;
 Pursues and tries to quench the flame,
 And pines the pool beside.

The author of her crimes and woes,
 The knight, a something feels ;
 He joins the revel deep and long,
 And from fell conscience steals.

But pale his face and quick his pulse ;
 His courage now is gone ;
 His fears are rais'd at every gust—
 His thoughts—the Maid of Wone.

“ I'm here,” a horrid voice scream'd out,
 “ Thy doom at last has come—
 This dart !”—she struck—his life has fled.
 “ Revenge !—I'm Maid of Wone !”

FROM THE GERMAN OF BUEGER.

HANS BEUDIX.

There once was an Emperor (so says my story,)
 Not so fond of his ease as he was of his glory :
 Dwelt near him an abbot, who, (rightly enough,
 To *my* fancy,) deem'd glory but flatulent stuff.

The first was a warrior, nurs'd in the field,
 And had oft, for a pillow, made use of his shield ;—
 On black bread and water contented to dine,
 'Twas seldom he tasted a drop of good wine.

Such a life had ill suited the man of the gown ;—
 For he always reposed on the softest of down ;
 Like the full moon his face, as became his vocation,
 Which betray'd but few symptoms of mortification !

Why, or wherefore, I know not, but leave you to judge,
 The Emperor ow'd our good Abbot a grudge ;
 So, returning one day from his usual ride,
 Reclin'd in his arbour the priest he espied :—

And checking his Barb, in his fullest career,
 He accosted the servant of Christ with a sneer,—
 “ Holy father, how fare ye ? Those quellers of sin,
 Long fasts, I perceive do not make a man thin !

Since your life must be dull, and your pastimes are few,
 You will thank me for finding you something to do,—
 Your worship's vast learning we, all of us, know ;
 Nay, 'tis rumour'd, Sir Priest, you can hear the grass
 grow.

That such talents should rust, were a pity indeed !
 So, I give you three exquisite riddles to read :
 To each of my questions, (as surely you can, sir,)
 At the end of three months, you will find the true answer.

With my crown on my head, in my costliest robe,
 When I sit on my throne, with my sceptre and globe,
 Resolve me, most learned of prelates on earth,
 How much, to a farthing, thy emperor's worth ?

The problem I next to your wisdom propound,
 Is, how long it would take one to ride the world round ?
 To a minute compute it, without more or less ;
 For this is a trifle you'll easily guess !

And then I expect you to tell me my thought,
 When next to my presence, Lord Abbot, you're brought ;
 And, whatever it be, it must prove a delusion,—
 Some error in judgment, or optic illusion !

Now, unless you shall answer these questions, I ween,
 Your lordship the last of your abbey has seen :
 And I'll have you paraded all over the land,
 On the back of an ass, with his tail in your hand !”

Off gallop'd the autocrat, laughing outright,
 And left the good man in a scrowful plight ;—
 Alarm'd and confounded, his anguish was such,
 That no thief on his trial e'er trembled as much !

In vain he appeal'd to both Weimar and Gotha,
 But they could not assist him a single iota ;
 And, though he had fee'd all the faculties round him,
 The faculties left him as wise as they found him.

Now, Time, the Impostor, was at his old tricks,
 Turning hours into days, and then days into weeks ;
 Then weeks into months,—till the term was at hand,
 Assign'd by the Despot's capricious command !

With musing, and fretting, ground down to the bone,
 He wander'd about in the fields, all alone ;

And, in one of these rambles, when most at a loss,
On his shepherd, Hans Beudix, he happen'd to cross.—

“ Lord Abbot,” cried Hans, “ I guess all is not right!
Why so clouded that brow, which, till late, was so bright?
To your faithful Hans Beudix, vouchsafe to impart
The trouble, that inwardly preys on thine heart!”—

“ Alas, my good Beudix, the Emperor's Grace
Has made thy poor master's a pitiful case!
He has given me three pestilent cob-nuts to crack,
Would puzzle Old Nick, with his dam at his back !

“ For the first,—when array'd in his costliest robe,
On his throne, with his crown, and his sceptre and globe,
Must I, the most luckless of Prelates on earth,
Compute, to a farthing, his Highness's worth!

The problem he, secondly, deign'd to propound,
Is, how long it would take him to ride the world round ?
And this, to a minute, without more or less ;—
He said, 'twas a trifle, quite easy to guess !

And, last, he expects me to tell him his thought,
When next to his highness's presence I'm brought ;
And, whatever it be, it must prove a delusion,—
Some error in judgment, or optic illusion !

And, unless I these precious conundrums explain,
He swears, I shall ne'er see my Abbey again ;—
And he'll have me paraded all over the land,
On the back of an ass, with his tail in my hand !”—

“ What, no more ?” quoth Hans Beudix,—“ Then, write
me an ape,

If I don't get your Reverence out of this scrape,
Just lend me your mantle, your crozier, and mitre,
And you'll find that old Beudix may still bite the biter !

It is true,—in book-learning I'm not very far gone,
Not a whit do I know of your heathenish jargon ;—
But old mother Nature has given me that,
Which the greatest of scholars can't always come at !”—

My Lord Abbot's countenance rose, as he spoke,
And to Beudix he handed his mitre and cloak ;
Who, arm'd with the crozier, repaired to the Court,
Assuming his master's right reverend port.—

The Emperor, clad in his costliest robe,
On his throne, with his crown, and his sceptre, and globe,
Thus address'd him,—“Thou wisest of Prelates on earth
Resolve, to a farthing, how much I am worth!”

“For thirty rix-dollars the Saviour was sold,
And, with all your gay trappings of purple and gold,
Twenty-nine is your price;—you'll not take it amiss,
If I judge that your value must fall short of his!”—

“So, so!” thought His Highness; “the priest has me
there!

I own, my Lord Abbot, the answer is fair—
Did greatness e'er swallow so bitter a pill?
But, like it or not, I must swallow it still!

And, now for a question your learning shall probe,
How long would it take me to ride round the globe?
To a minute compute it, without more or less;
You'll easily solve it, my lord, as I guess!”—

“If your Highness will please just to get on your horse,
With the rise of the sun, and pursue the sun's course,
Keeping always beside him, a million to one,
But in two dozen hours the whole business is done!”—

“Are you there, my old fox, with your *ifs* and your *ans*
But I need not remind you, they're not *pots and pans*,
Else tinkers would starve, (as I learnt from my nurse;)
Still the answer shall pass, for it might have been worse.

And now for the *paser*—mind what you're about;
For the donkey's at hand, and shall straight be led out,
What think I, that's false?—Tell me that, if you can;
Here you shall not come off with an *if* or an *an*.”—

“If I read not your thought, you may fry me for bacon;—
In which thought, my dread liege, you are shrewdly mis-
taken!

You think me the abbot—but I, as you'll find,
With all due submission, am—Beudix, his hind!”—

“What the d—l! Art thou not the Abbot of Lintz?
By my troth, thou hast fairly outwitted thy prince!
'Tis the cowl makes the monk, as I've heard people say;
So I dub thee Lord Abbot from this very day.

“For the former incumbent, an indolent sot!
On Dapple's bare withers, please God, he shall trot;

For his office, Hans Beudix is fitter by half;
And here I invest thee with ring and with staff."—

"Under favour, great sir, I can handle a crook.
But, alas ! I'm no very great hand at my book ;
I ne'er went to school, and no Latin have I—
Not so much as you'd write on the wing of a fly!"—

"Is it so my good fellow ? Then, more is the pity ;
So, bethink thee of some other thing that may fit ye.
Thy wit hath well pleased me ; and it shall go hard,
If Hans's sagacity miss its reward."—

"If such the conditions, the boon that I ask
Will prove to your highness no difficult task :
To your favour again, on my knees I implore,
That your highness will please my good lord to restore."—

The sovereign replied,—“ As I hope in God's grace,
The heart of Hans Beudix is in its right place.
Thy master, for me, shall his mitre enjoy,
And long may he wear it.—So, tell him, old boy.”—

ANON.

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