

Classic Poetry Series

Thomas Percy
- poems -

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Thomas Percy(1729 - 1811)

Thomas Percy was born on the 13th of April 1729 in Bridgnorth, Shropshire. He was educated at Bridgnorth Grammar School, later attending Christ Church, Oxford to receive a B.A. (1746 to 1750), again for an M.A. (1750 to 1753) and Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1770 for a D.D.. He was fluent in English, Latin and Greek. Between 1753 and 1782 he lived in Easton-Maudit, Northamptonshire.

He was Protestant bishop of Dromore, before becoming a Dean. He married Anne Percy in 1759, and went on to become the father to two daughters; Barbara Isted and Elizabeth Meade. He died on the 30th of September in 1811 in Dromore, Ireland, and was subsequently buried at Dromore Cathedral.

Barbara Allen's Cruelty

In Scarlet towne, where I was borne,
There was a faire maid dwellin,
Made every youth crye, wel-awaye!
Her name was Barbara Allen.

All in the merrye month of May,
When greene buds they were swellin,
Yong Jemmye Grove on his death-bed lay,
For love of Barbara Allen.

He sent his man unto her then,
To the town, where shee was dwellin;
You must come to my master deare,
Giff your name be Barbara Allen.

For death is printed on his face,
And ore his hart is stealin:
Then haste away to comfort him,
O lovelye Barbara Allen.

Though death be printed on his face,
And ore his harte is stealin,
Yet little better shall he bee,
For bonny Barbara Allen.

So slowly, slowly, she came up,
And slowly she came nye him;
And all she sayd, when there she came,
Yong man, I think y'are dying.

He turnd his face unto her strait,
With deadlye sorrow sighing;
O lovely maid, come pity mee,
Ime on my death-bed lying.

If on your death-bed you doe lye,
What needs the tale you are tellin:
I cannot keep you from your death;
Farewell, sayd Barbara Allen.

He turnd his face unto the wall,
As deadlye pangs he fell in:
Adieu! adieu! adieu to you all,
Adieu to Barbara Allen.

As she was walking ore the fields,
She heard the bell a knellin;
And every stroke did seem to saye,
Unworthy Barbara Allen.

She turnd her bodye round about,
And spied the corps a coming:
Laye downe, laye downe the corps, she sayd,
That I may look upon him.

With scornful eye she looked downe,
Her cheeke with laughter swellin;
That all her friends cryd out amaine,
Unworthye Barbara Allen.

When he was dead, and laid in grave,
Her harte was struck with sorrowe,
O mother, mother, make my bed,
For I shall dye to morrowe.

Hard harted creature him to slight,
Who loved me so dearlye:
O that I had beene more kind to him,
When he was live and neare me!

She, on her death-bed as she laye,
Beg'd to be buried by him;
And sore repented of the daye,
That she did ere denye him.

Farewell, she sayd, ye virgins all,
And shun the fault I fell in:
Henceforth take warning by the fall
Of cruel Barbara Allen.

Edward, Edward

Why dois your brand sae drap wi' bluid,
Edward, Edward?

Why dois your brand sae drap wi' bluid?

And why sae sad gang ye, O?

O, I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,

O, I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee, O.

Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,

Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee, O.

O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,

O, I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie, O.

Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,

Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule ye drie, O.

O, I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,

O, I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee, O.

And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,
Edward, Edward?

And whatten penance will ye drie for that?
My deir son, now tell me, O.

Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,

Il set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea, O.

And what wul ye doe wi' your towirs and your ha',
Edward, Edward?

And what wul ye doe wi' your towirs and your ha',

That were sae fair to see, O?
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa',
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa',
For here nevir mair maun I bee, O.

And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea, O?
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, let them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see, O.

And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell mee, O.
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me, O.

Thomas Percy

King Arthur's Death

On Trinitye Mondaye in the morne,
This sore battayle was doom'd to bee,
Where manye a knyghte cry'd, Well-awaye!
Alacke, it was the more pittie.

Ere the first crowinge of the cocke,
When as the kinge in his bed laye,
He thoughte Sir Gawaine to him came,
And there to him these wordes did saye:

"Nowe, as you are mine unkle deare,
And as you prize your life, this daye
O meet not with your foe in fight;
Putt off the battayle, if yee maye.

"For Sir Launcelot is nowe in Fraunce,
And with him many an hardye knyghte:
Who will within this moneth be backe,
And will assiste yee in the fighte."

The kinge then call'd his nobles all,
Before the breakinge of the daye;
And told them howe Sir Gawaine came,
And there to him these wordes did saye.

His nobles all this counsayle gave,
That earlye in the morning, hee
Shold send awaye an herauld-at-armes,
To aske a parley faire and free.

Then twelve good knyghtes King Arthur chose,
The best of all that with him were,
To parley with the foe in field,
And make with him agreement faire.

The king he charged all his hoste,
In readinesse there for to bee;
But noe man shold noe weapon sturre,
Unlesse a sword drawne they shold see.

And Mordred, on the other parte,
Twelve of his knights did likewise bringe,
The best of all his companye,
To hold the parley with the kinge.

Sir Mordred alsoe charged his hoste,
In readinesse there for to bee;
But noe man sholde noe weapon sturre,
But if a sworde drawne they shold see.

For he durste not his unkle truste,
Nor he his nephewe, sothe to tell;
Alacke! it was a woefulle case,
As ere in Christentye befelle.

But when they were together mette,
And both to faire accordance broughte,
And a month's league betweene them sette,
Before the battayle sholde be foughte,

An addere crept forth of a bushe,
Stunge one o' th' king's knightes on the knee;
Alacke! It was a woefulle chance,
As ever was in Christentiè.

When the knighte found him wounded sore,
And sawe the wild-worm hanginge there,
His sworde he from his scabberde drewe;
A piteous case, as ye shall heare.

For when the two hostes sawe the sworde,
They joyned battayle instantlye;
Till of soe manye noble knightes,
On one side there were left but three.

For all were slain that durst abide,
And but some fewe that fled awaye:
Ay mee! it was a bloodye fielde,
As ere was foughte on a summer's daye.

Upon King Arthur's own partyè,

Onlye himselfe escaped there,
And Lukyn Duke of Gloster free,
And the king's butler Bedevere.

And when the king beheld his knightes
All dead and scattered on the molde,
The teares fast trickled downe his face;
That manlye face in fight so bolde.

"Nowe reste yee all, brave knights," he said,
"Soe true and faithful to your trust:
And must ye then, ye valiant hearts,
Be lefte to moulder into dust!

"Most loyal have yee been to mee,
Most true and faithful unto deathe:
And, oh! to rayse yee up againe,
How freelye could I yield my breathe!

"But see, the traitor's yet alive!
Lo where hee stalkes among the deade!
Nowe bitterlye he shall abyde:
And vengeance fall upon his head."

"O stayer, my liege," then sayd the duke;
"O stayer for love and charitie;
Remember what the vision spake,
Nor meete your foe, if it may bee."

"O stayer mee not, thou worthy wight,
This debt my loyal knights I owe:
Betide my life, betide me death,
I will avenge them of their foe."

Then straite he grasp'd his trustye speare,
And on his horse then mounted hee:
As his butler holpe him to his horse,
His bowels gushed to his knee.

"Alas!" then sayd the noble king,
"That I should live this sight to see!

To see this good knight here be slaine,
All for his love in helping mee!

He put his speare into his reste.
And to Sir Mordred loud gan crye:
"Nowe sette thyself upon thy garde,
For, traitor, nowe thy death is nye."

Sir Mordred lifted up his sworde,
And fierce to meet the king ran hee:
The king his speare he through him thrust,
A fathom thorow his bodie.

When Mordered felt the stroke of death,
And found that he was wounded soe,
He thrust himselfe upon the speare,
And strucke the king a deadlye blowe.

Then grimlye dyed Sir Mordered,
Presentlye upon that tree:
And bloody streames ranne from the kinge,
Ere to the duke returned hee.

Sir Lukyn then he thus bespake:
"Sir Knighte, thou hast been faithfulle tryde;
Nowe take my sworde Excalibar,
That hangs so freelye by my syde;

"O take my sword Excalibar,
And there into the river throwe:
For here, henceforth, benethe this tree,
All use of weapons I forgoe.

"And fare thee well, thou trustye sword,
A better neer had valiant knighte;
With thee full ofte, and many a daye,
Have I withstood my foe in fighte.

With this good fauchion in my hande,
Oft have I reaped the bloody feelde:
But nowe the fatalle houre is come,
That never more I may thee weelde."

The duke to the river side he went,
And there his owne sword in threwe he;
But he kept back Excalibar,
He kept it back in privitie.

For all of coleyne was the blade,
And all the hilte of precious stone:
"And ever alacke!" then sayd the knighte,
"Must such a sword awaye be throwne?"

Then backe he came unto the kinge,
Who sayd, Sir Lukyn, what did yee see?"
"Nothing, my liege, save that the winde
Blewe oer the waters faire and free."

"O goe againe," then said the kinge,
"O good Sir Lukyn, goe againe:
Into the rivere throwe my sword,
Nor keepe me lingering here in paine."

The duke then to the river went,
And the kings scabberd in threwe hee;
But he kept backe Excalibar,
And hid it undernethe a tree.

Then backe he came to tell the kinge,
Who sayde, "Sir Lukyn, sawe ye oughte?"

"Nothings, my liege, save that the winde
Nowe with the angrye waters fought."

"O Lukyn, Lukyn," said the kinge,
"Twice haste thou dealt deceytfullye:
Alacke, whom may wee ever truste,
When suche a knighte soe false can bee!

"Saye, wouldst thou have thy master dead,
All for a sword that wins thine eye?
Now goe againe, and throwe it in,
Or here the one of us shall dye."

The duke, all shent with this rebuke,
No aunswere made unto the kinge;
But to the rivere tooke the sworde,
And threwe it far as he coulde flinge.

A hande and an arme did meete the sworde,
And flourishd three times in the air;
Then sunke benethe the renninge streme,
And of the duke was seene noe mair.

All sore astonied stood the duke,
He stood as still, as still mote bee;
Then hastened backe to telle the kinge,
But he was gone from under the tree.

But to what place he cold not tell,
For never after hee did him spye;
But hee sawe a barge goe from the land,
And hee heard ladyes howle and crye.

And whether the kinge were there or not,
Hee never knewe, nor ever colde,
For from that sad and direfulle daye,
Hee never more was seene on molde.

Thomas Percy

King Ryence's Challenge

As it fell out on a Pentecost day,
King Arthur at Camelot kept his court royall,
With his faire queene dame Guenever the gay,
And many bold barons sitting in hall,
With ladies attired in purple and pall,
And heraults in hewkes, hooting on high,
Cryed, Largesse, Largesse, Chevaliers tres-hardie.

A doughty dwarfe to the uppermost deas
Right pertlye gan pricke, kneeling on knee;
With steven fulle stoute amids all the preas,
Say'd, "Nowe Sir King Arthur, God save thee and see!
Sir Ryence of North-Gales greeteth well thee,
And bids thee thy beard anon to him send,
Or else from thy jaws hewill it off rend.

"For his robe of state is a rich scarlet mantle,
With eleven kings beards bordered about,
And there is room lefte yet in a kantle,
For thine to stande, to make the twelfth out.
This must be done, be thou never so stout;
This must be done, I tell thee no fable,
Maugre the teethe of all thy Round Table."

When this mortal message from his mouthe past,
Great was the noyse bothe in hall and in bower:
The king fum'd; the queene screecht; ladies were aghast;
Princes puff'd; barons blustred; lords began lower;
Knights stormed; squires startled, like steeds in a stower;
Pages and yeomen yell'd out in the hall;

Then in came Sir Kay, the king's seneschal.
"Silence, my soveraignes," quoth this courteous knight,
And in that stound the stowre began still:
Then the dwarfe's dinner full deerely was dight;
Of wine and wassel he had his wille,
And when he had eaten and drunken his fill,
An hundred pieces of fine coynd gold
Were given this dwarf for his message bold.

"But say to Sir Ryence, thou dwarf," quoth the king,
"That for his bold message I do him defye,
And shortlyewith basins and pans will him ring
Out of North-Gales; where he and I
With swords, and not razors, quickly shall trye,
Whether he, or King Arthur, will prove the best barbor:"
And therewith he shook his good sword Escalàbor.

Thomas Percy

Sir Lancelot Du Lake

When Arthur first in court began,
And was approvèd king,
By force of armes great victorys wonne,
And conquest home did bring;

Then into England straight he came
With fifty good and able
Knights that resorted unto him,
And were of the Round Table.

And many justs and turnaments
Whereto were many prest,
Wherein some knights did farr excell,
And eke surmount the rest.

But one Sir Lancelot du Lake,
Who was approvèd well,
He for his deeds and feates of armes
All others did excell.

When he had rested him a while,
In play, and game, and sportt,
He said he wold goe prove himselfe,
In some adventurous sort.

He armèd rode in forrest wide,
And met a damsell faire,
Who told him of adventures great,
Whereto he gave good care.

"Why shold I not?" quoth Lancelott tho,
"For that cause came I hither."
"Thou seemst," quoth she, "a knight full good,"
And I will bring thee thither,

"Wheras a mighty knight doth dwell,
That now is of great fame;
Therefore tell me what knight thou art,
And what may be thy name."

"My name is Lancelot du Lake."
Quoth she, "It likes me than;
Here dwelles a knight who never was
Yet matcht with any man;

"Who has in prison threescore knights
And four, that he did wound;
Knights of King Arthurs court they be,
And of his Table Round."

She brought him to a river side,
And also to a tree,
Whereon a copper bason hung,
And many shields to see.

He struck soe hard, the bason broke:
And Tarquin soon he spyed:
Who drove a horse before him fast,
Whereon a knight lay tyed.

"Sir Knight," then sayd Sir Lancelòtt,
"Bring me that horse-load hither,
And lay him downe, and let him rest;
Weel try our force together.

"For, as I understand, thou hast,
Soe far as thou art able,
Done great despite and shame unto
The knights of the Round Table."

"If thou be of the Table Round,"
Quoth Tarquin, speedilye,
"Both thee and all thy fellowship
I utterly defye."

"That's over much," quoth Lancelott tho,
"Defend thee by and by."
They sett their speares unto their steeds,
And each att other flye.

They coucht their speares, (their horses ran,

As though there had been thunder);
And stricke them each immidst their shields,
Wherewith they broke in sunder.

Their horsse's backs brake under them,
The knights were both astound;
To avoyd their horsse's they made great haste,
And light upon the ground.

They tooke them to their shields full fast,
Their swords they drew out than;
With mighty strokes most eagerlye
Each at the other ran.

They wounded were, and bled full sore,
They both for breath did stand,
And leaning on their swordes awhile,
Quoth Tarquine, "Hold thy hand,

"And tell to me what I shall aske;"
"Say on," quoth Lancelot tho.
"Thou art," quoth Tarquine, "the best knight
That ever I did know;

"And like a knight that I did hate;
Soe that thou be not hee,
I will deliver all the rest,
And eke accord with thee."

"That is well sayd," quoth Lancelott tho,
"But sith it must be soe,
What knight is that thou hatest thus?
I pray thee to meshow."

"His name is Lancelot du Lake,
He slew my brother deere;
Him I suspect of all the rest:
I would I had him here."

"Thy wish thou hast, but yet unknowne;
I am Lancelot du Lake,
Now knight of Arthurs Table Round;

King Hauds son of Schuwake;

"And I desire thee do thy worst."

"Ho, ho," quoth Tarquin tho,

"One of us two shall end our lives,
Before that we do go.

"If thou be Lancelot du Lake

Then welcome shalt thou bee;

Wherefore see thou thyself defend,

For now defye I thee."

They buckled then together so,

Like unto wild boares rashing,

And with their swords and shields they ran

At one another slashing.

The ground besprinkled was with blood,

Tarquin began to yield;

For he gave backe for wearinesse,

And lowe did beare his shield.

This soone Sir Lancelot espyde,

He leapt upon him then,

He pull'd him downe upon his knee,

And rushing off his helm,

Forthwith he strucke his necke in two;

And when he had soe done,

From prison, threescore knights and four

Delivered everye one.

Thomas Percy

Sweet William's Ghost

There came a ghost to Margaret's door,
With many a grievous grone,
And ay he tirdled at the pin;
But answer made she none.

Is this my father Philip?
Or is't my brother John?
Or is't my true love Willie,
From Scotland new come home?

'Tis not thy father Philip;
Nor yet thy brother John:
But 'tis thy true love Willie,
From Scotland new come home.

O sweet Margret! O dear Margret!
I pray thee speak to mee:
Give me my faith and troth, Margret,
As I gave it to thee.

Thy faith and troth thou'se nevir get,
'Of me shalt nevir win,'
Till that thou come within my bower,
And kiss my cheek and chin.

If I should come within thy bower,
I am no earthly man:
And should I kiss thy rosy lipp,
Thy days will not be lang.

O sweet Margret, O dear Margret,
I pray thee speak to mee:
Give me my faith and troth, Margret,
As I gave it to thee.

Thy faith and troth thou'se nevir get,
'Of me shalt nevir win,'
Till thou take me to yon kirk yard,
And wed me with a ring.

My bones are buried in a kirk yard
Afar beyond the sea,
And it is but my sprite, Margret,
That's speaking now to thee.

She stretched out her lilly-white hand,
As for to do her best:
Hae there your faith and troth, Willie,
God send your soul good rest.

Now she has kilted her robes of green,
A piece below her knee:
And a' the live-lang winter night
The dead corps followed shee.

Is there any room at your head, Willie?
Or any room at your feet?
Or any room at your side, Willie,
Wherein that I may creep?

There's nae room at my head, Margret,
There's nae room at my feet,
There's no room at my side, Margret,
My coffin is made so meet.

Then up and crew the red red cock,
And up then crew the gray:
'Tis time, 'tis time, my dear Margret,
That you were gane away.

No more the ghost to Margret said,
But, with a grievous grone,
Evanish'd in a cloud of mist,
And left her all alone.

O stay, my only true love, stay,
The constant Margret cried:
Wan grew her cheeks, she clos'd her een,
Stretch'd her saft limbs, and died.

The Bonny Earl Of Murray

Ye highlands, and ye lawlands,
Oh! whair hae ye been?
They hae slaine the earl of Murray,
And hae layd him on the green.

Now wae be to thee, Huntley!
And whairfore did you sae!
I bade you bring him wi' you,
But forbade you him to slay.

He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring;
And the bonny earl of Murray,
Oh! he might hae been a king.

He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the ba';
And the bonny earl of Murray
Was the flower among them a'.

He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the gluve;
And the bonny earl of Murray,
Oh! he was the queenes luv.

Oh! lang will his lady
Luke owre the castle downe,
Ere she see the earl of Murray
Cum sounding throw the towne.

Thomas Percy

The Boy And The Mantle

In the third day of May,
To Carleile did come
A kind curteous child,
That cold much of wisdom.

A kirtle and a mantle
This child had uppon,
With brouches and ringes
Full richelye bedone.

He had a sute of silke
About his middle drawne;
Without he cold of curtesye,
He thought itt much shame.

"God speed thee, King Arthur,
Sitting at thy meate:
And the goodly Queene Guénever
I cannott her forgett.

"I tell you, lords, in this hall,
I hett you all to heede,
Except you be the more surer,
Is you for to dread."

He plucked out of his poterner,
And longer wold not dwell;
He pulled forth a pretty mantle,
Betweene two nut-shells.

"Have thou here, King Arthur,
Have thou heere of mee;
Give itt to thy comely queene,
Shapen as itt is alreadye.

"Itt shall never become that wiffe,
That hath once done amisse: -"
Then every knight in the kings court
Began to care for his.

Forth came dame Guénever;
To the mantle shee her hied;
The ladye shee was newfangle,
But yett shee was affrayd.

When shee had taken the mantle,
She stode as shee had beene madd:
It was from the top to the toe
As sheeres had itt shread.

One while was it gule,
Another while was itt greene;
Another while was it wadded;
Ill itt did her beseeme.

Another while was it blacke,
And bore the worst hue:
"By my troth," quoth King Arthur,
"I thinke thou be not true."

Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee;
Fast, with a rudd redd,
To her chamber can shee flee.

She curst the weaver and the walker
That clothe that had wrought,
And bade a vengeance on his crowne
That hither hath itt brought.

"I had rather be in a wood,
Under a greene tree,
Then in King Arthurs court
Shamed for to bee."

Kay called forth his ladye,
And bade her come neere;
Saies, "Madam, and thou be guiltye,
I pray thee hold thee there."

Forth came his ladye,

Shortlye and anon;
Boldlye to the mantle
Then is shee gone.

When she had tane the mantle,
And cast it her about,
Then was shee bare
Before all the rout.

Then every knight,
That was in the kings court,
Talked, laughed, and showted
Full oft att that sport.

She threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee;
Fast, with a red rudd,
To her chamber can shee flee.

Forth came an old knight
Pattering ore a creede,
And he proferred to this little boy
Twenty markes to his meede,

And all the time of the Christmasse,
Willinglye to ffeede;
For why this mantle might
Doe his wiffe some need.

When she had tane the mantle,
Of cloth that was made,
Shee had no more left on her,
But a tassell and a threed:

Then every knight in the kings court
Bade evill might shee speed.
Shee threw downe the mantle,
That bright was of blee;

And fast, with a redd rudd,
To her chamber can shee flee.
Craddocke called forth his ladye,

And bade her come in;

Saith, "Winne this mantle, ladye,
With a litle dinne.

"Winne this mantle, ladye,
And it shal be thine,

If thou never did amisse
Since thou wast mine."
Forth came Craddockes ladye,
Shortlye and anon;

But boldlye to the mantle
Then is shee gone.
When she had tane the mantle,
And cast it her about,

Upp att her great toe
It began to crinkle and crows:
Shee said, "Bowe downe, mantle,
And shame me not for nought.

"Once I did amisse,
I tell you certainlye,
When I kist Craddockes mouth
Under a greene tree;

When I kist Craddockes mouth
Before he marryed mee."
When shee had her shreeven,
And her sines shee had tolde,

The mantle stoode about her
Right as shee wold,
Seemelye of coulour,
Glittering like gold:

Then every knight in Arthurs court
Did her behold.
Then spake dame Guénever
To Arthur our king;

"She hath tane yonder mantle
Not with right, but with wronge.
"See you not yonder woman,
That maketh her self soe cleane?

I have seene tane out of her bedd
Of men fiveteene;
"Priests, clarkes, and wedded men
From her, bedeene:

Yett shee taketh the mantle,
And maketh her self cleane."
Then spake the little boy,
That kept the mantle in hold;

Sayes, "King, chasten thy wiffe,
Of her words shee is to bold:
"Shee is a bitch and a witch,
And a whore bold:

King, in thine owne hall
Thou art a cuckold."
The little boy stoode
Looking out a dore;

And there as he was lookinge
He was ware of a wyld bore.
He was ware of a wyld bore,
Wold have werryed a man:

He pulld forth a wood kniffe,
Fast thither that he ran:
He brought in the bores head,
And quitted him like a man.

He brought in the bores head,
And was wonderous bold:
He said there was never a cuckolds kniffe
Carve itt that cold.

Some rubbed their knives
Uppon a whetstone:

Some threw them under the table,
And said they had none.

King Arthur and the child
Stood looking upon them;
All their knives edges
Turned backe againe.

Craddocke had a little knive
Of iron and of steele;
He britled the bores head
Wonderous weele,

That every knight in the kings court
Had a morssell.
The little boy had a horne,
Of red gold that ronge:

He said there was "noe cuckolde
Shall drinke of my horne,
But he shold it sheede,
Either behind or before."

Some shedd on their shoulder,
And some on their knee;
He that cold not hitt his mouthe,
Put it in his eye:

And he that was a cuckold
Every man might him see.
Craddocke wan the horne,
And the bores head:

His ladie wan the mantle
Unto her meede.
Everye such a lovely ladye
God send her well to speede.

Thomas Percy

The Legend Of King Arthur

Of Brutus' blood, in Brittain borne,
King Arthur I am to name;
Through Christendome and Heathynesse
Well knowne is my worthy fame.

In Jesus Christ I doe beleeeve;
I am a Christyan bore;
The Father, Sone, and Holy Gost,
One God, I doe adore.

In the four hundred ninetieth yeere,
Oer Brittain I did rayne,
After my Savior Christ his byrth,
What time I did maintaine

The fellowship of the Table Round,
Soe famous in those dayes;
Whereatt a hundred noble knights
And thirty sat alwayes:

Who for their deeds and martiall feates,
As bookes done yett record,
Amongst all other nations
Wer feared through the world

And in the castle of Tyntagill
King Uther mee begate,
Of Agyana, a bewtyous ladye,
And come of hie estate.

And when I was fifteen yeere old,
Then was I crowned kinge:
All Brittain, that was att an upròre,
I did to quiett bringe;

And drove the Saxons from the realme,
Who had opprest this land;
All Scotland then, throughe manly feates,
I conquered with my hand.

Ireland, Denmarke, Norwaye,
These countryes wan I all;
Iseland, Gotheland, and Swetheland;
And made their kings my thrall.

I conquered all Gallya,
That now is called France;
And slew the hardye Froll in feild,
My honor to advance.

And the ugly gyant Dynabus,
Soe terrible to vewe,
That in Saint Barnards mount did lye,
By force of armes I slew.

And Lucyus, the emperour of Rome,
I brought to deadly wracke;
And a thousand more of noble knightes
For feare did turne their backe.

Five kinges of paynims I did kill
Amidst that bloody strife;
Besides the Grecian emperour,
Who alsoe lost his liffe.

Whose carcasse I did send to Rome,
Cladd poorlye on a beere;
And afterward I past Mount-Joye
The next approaching yeere.

Then I came to Rome, where I was mett
Right as a conquerour,
And by all the cardinals solempnelye
I was crowned an emperour.

One winter there I made abode,
Then word to mee was brought,
How Mordred had oppressed the crowne,
What treason he had wrought

Att home in Brittain with my queene:

Therefore I came with speede
To Brittain backe, with all my power,
To quitt that traiterous deede;

And soone at Sandwiche I arrivde,
Where Mordred me withstoode:
But yett at last I landed there,
With effusion of much blood.

For there my nephew Sir Gawaine dyed,
Being wounded in that sore
The whiche Sir Launcelot in fight
Had given him before.

Then chased I Mordered away,
Who fledd to London right,
From London to Winchester, and
To Cornwalle tooke his flyght.

And still I him pursued with speed,
Till at the last wee mett;
Wherby an appointed day of fight
Was there agreed and set:

Where we did fight, of mortal life
Eche other to deprive,
Till of a hundred thousand men
Scarce one was left alive.

There all the noble chivalrye
Of Brittain took their end.
O see how fickle is their state
That doe on fates depend!

There all the traiterous men were slaine,
Not one escapte away;
And there dyed all my vallyant knightes.
Alas! that woefull day!

Two and twenty yeere I ware the crowne
In honor and great fame,
And thus by death was suddenlye

Deprived of the same.

Thomas Percy

The Marriage Of Sir Gawaine

King Arthur lives in merry Carleile,
And seemely is to see;
And there with him queene Guenever,
That bride soe bright of blee.

And there with him queene Guenever,
That bride so bright in bowre:
And all his barons about him stode,
That were both stiffe and stowre.

The king a royale Christmasse kept,
With mirth and princelye cheare;
To him repaired many a knighte,
That came both farre and neare.

And when they were to dinner sette,
And cups went freely round;
Before them came a faire damselle,
And knelt upon the ground.

A boone, a boone, O kinge Arthùre,
I beg a boone of thee;
Avenge me of a carlish knighte,
Who hath shent my love and me.

At Tearne-Wadling his castle stands,
Near to that lake so fair,
And proudlye rise the battlements,
And streamers deck the air.

Noe gentle knighte, nor ladye gay,
May pass that castle-walle:
But from that foule discourteous knighte,
Mishappe will them befalle.

Hee's twyce the size of common men,
Wi' thewes, and sinewes stronge,
And on his backe he bears a clubbe,
That is both thicke and longe.

This grimme baròne 'twas our harde happe,
But yester morne to see;
When to his bowre he bare my love,
And sore misused mee.

And when I told him, king Arthùre
As lyttle shold him spare;
Goe tell, sayd hee, that cuckold kinge,
To meete mee if he dare.

Upp then sterted king Arthùre,
And sware by hille and dale,
He ne'er wolde quitt that grimme baròne,
Till he had made him quail.

Goe fetch my sword Excalibar:
Goe saddle mee my steede;
Nowe, by my faye, that grimme baròne
Shall rue this ruthfulle deede.

And when he came to Tearne Wadlinge
Benethe the castle walle:
"Come forth; come forth; thou proude baròne,

Or yielde thyself my thralle."

On magicke grounde that castle stoode,
And fenc'd with many a spelle:
Noe valiant knighte could tread thereon,
But straithe his courage felle.

Forth then rush'd that carlish knight,
King Arthur felte the charme:
His sturdy sinewes lost their strengthe,
Downe sunke his feeble arme.

Nowe yield thee, yield thee, kinge Arthùre,
Now yield thee, unto mee:
Or fighte with mee, or lose thy lande,
Noe better termes maye bee,

Unless thou sweare upon the rood,
And promise on thy faye,
Here to returne to Tearne-Wadling,
Upon the new-yeare's daye;

And bringe me worde what thing it is
All women moste desyre;
This is thy ransome, Arthur, he sayes,
Ile have noe other hyre.

King Arthur then helde up his hande,
And sware upon his faye,
Then tooke his leave of the grimme barone
And faste hee rode awaye.

And he rode east, and he rode west,
And did of all inquyre,
What thing it is all women crave,
And what they most desyre.

Some told him riches, pompe, or state;
Some rayment fine and brighte;
Some told him mirthe; some flatterye;
And some a jollye knighte.

In letters all king Arthur wrote,
And seal'd them with his ringe:
But still his minde was helde in doubte,
Each tolde a different thinge.

As ruthfulle he rode over a more,
He saw a ladye sette
Betweene an oke, and a greene holléye,
All clad in red scarlette.

Her nose was crookt and turnd outwàrde,
Her chin stoode all awrye;
And where as sholde have been her mouthe,
Lo! there was set her eye:

Her haire, like serpents, clung aboute
Her cheekes of deadlye hewe:

A worse-form'd ladye than she was,
No man mote ever viewe.

To hail the king in seemelye sorte
This ladye was fulle faine;
But king Arthùre all sore amaz'd,
No aunswere made againe.

What wight art thou, the ladye sayd,
That wilt not speake to mee;
Sir, I may chance to ease thy paine,
Though I be foule to see.

If thou wilt ease my paine, he sayd,
And helpe me in my neede;
Ask what thou wilt, thou grimme ladye
And it shall bee thy meede.

O sweare mee this upon the roode,
And promise on thy faye;
And here the secrette I will telle,
That shall thy ransome paye.

King Arthur promis'd on his faye,
And sware upon the roode;
The secrette then the ladye told,
As lightlye well shee cou'de.

Now this shall be my paye, sir king,
And this my guerdon bee,
That some yong fair and courtlye knight,
Thou bringe to marrye mee.

Fast then pricked king Arthùre
Ore hille, and dale, and downe:
And soone he founde the barone's bowre:
And soone the grimme baroûne.

He bare his clubbe upon his backe,
Hee stode bothe stiffe and stronge;
And, when he had the letters reade,
Awaye the lettres flunge.

Nowe yelde thee, Arthur, and thy lands,
All forfeit unto mee;
For this is not thy paye, sir king,
Nor may thy ransome bee.

Yet hold thy hand, thou proud baròne,
I praye thee hold thy hand;
And give mee leave to speake once more
In reskewe of my land.

This morne, as I came over a more,
I saw a ladye sette
Betwene an oke, and a greene hollèye,
All clad in red scarlèt.

Shee sayes, all women will have their wille,
This is their chief desyre;
Now yield, as thou art a barone true,
That I have payd mine hyre.

An earlye vengeaunce light on her!
The carlish baron swore:
Shee was my sister tolde thee this,
And shee's a mishapen whore.

But here I will make mine avowe,
To do her as ill a turne:
For an ever I may that foule theefe gette,
In a fyre I will her burne.

Thomas Percy