## THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST, AND OTHER POEMS

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The Eve of the Conquest, and Other Poems by Henry Taylor

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### **HENRY TAYLOR**

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### BY HENRY TAYLOR,

AVINOR OF "PRILIF VAN ARVEYBLDE."

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.
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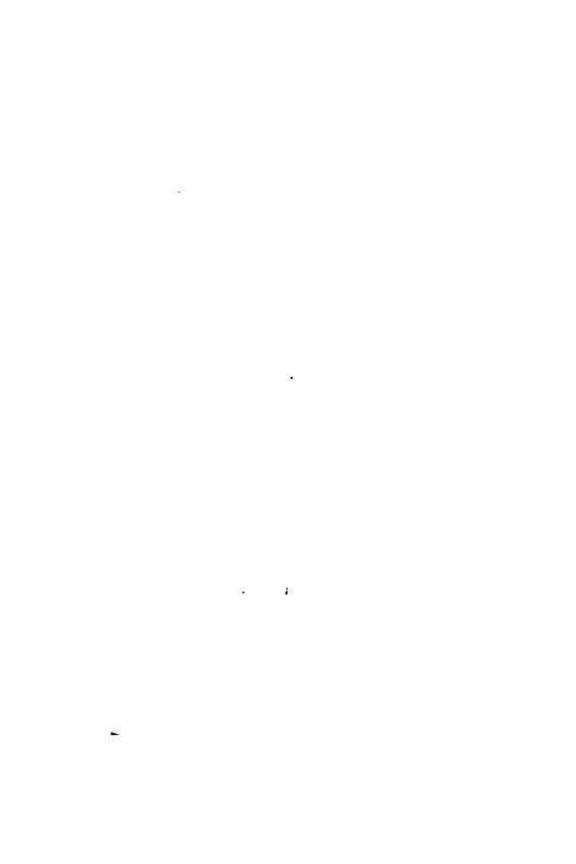
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#### THE HON. MRS. HENRY TAYLOR.

DEAR Alice, thro' much mockery of your's (Impatient of my labours long and slow And small results that I made baste to show From time to time) you scornfullest of reviewers, These verses worked their way : "Get on, get on," Was mostly my encouragement: But I Dead to all spurring kept my pace foregone And long had learnt all laughter to defy. I thought moreover that your laugh (for hard Would be the portion of the hapless Bard Who found not in each comment grave or gay Some flattering unction) . . . In your laugh, I say, A subtle something glimmered; 'twas a laugh If half of mockery, yet of pleasure half. And since, on looking round, I know not who Will greet my offering with as good a grace, And in their favour give it half a place, These flights, for fault of better, short and few, Dear Alice, I must dedicate to you.

MORTLAKE, Nov. 1847.



#### THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST.

A crount night descended on the slopes
Of Mountfield, and the scattered woods beyond,
Where lay the Saxon force; and now the wind
Till sunset that had seemed to hold its breath,
Burst forth in gusts and flaws, the sea far off
Sounding a dirge a day before the time.
A flush of light was in the Southern sky.
Cast from the Norman camp, and more remote
At intervals around, from Lunsford-heath
To Broad-oak-cross, and Udimore to Hooe,
The frequent watchfire glimmer'd, where the boors,

Though scared yet greedy, grimly lurked aloof, Expecting plunder when to-morrow's storm Should leave the wreck of battle on the plain. So fell the night.

Upon the Saxon flank A forest stood, within whose wavering skirt Was scoop'd a shelter for King Harold's tent. And thither when the fitful wind was lulled Came sounds of jollity and boisterous songs, Which did not please the King .- "Leofwyn, Brand, Go bid the chiefs abate this barbarous mirth, And counsel them that cannot sleep to pray." They went, and shortly there was silence. Then The King composed himself as seeking rest; But though his limbs were motionless, the Page Who watched him, noted that his eyes were closed More fast than if in sleep, and that his lips Were ever and anon compress'd to curb A quivering movement. Suddenly he rose, And shouted for the Page—but he was there.