

**HERVÉ RIEL: A  
POEM BY ROBERT  
BROWNING**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649250202

Hervé Riel: A Poem by Robert Browning by H. Walford Davies

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Cover @ 2017

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**H. WALFORD DAVIES**

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BROWNING**



NOVELLO'S ORIGINAL OCTAVO EDITION.

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# HERVÉ RIEL

A POEM

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

SET TO MUSIC

FOR BARITONE SOLO, CHORUS, AND ORCHESTRA

BY

H. WALFORD DAVIES.

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PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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LONDON AND NEW YORK  
NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

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Mus 644.575.651

LONDON:  
NOVELLO, EWER AND CO  
PRINTERS.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

OCT 24 1966

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Q. F. F. F. F. F.

TO MY DEAR FRIEND

M. G. M.





# HERVÉ RIEL.

## I.

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,  
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!  
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,  
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,  
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint-Malo on the Rance,  
With the English fleet in view.

## II.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;  
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, *Damfréville*;  
Close on him fled, great and small,  
Twenty-two good ships in all;  
And they signalled to the place  
"Help the winners of a race!  
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us quick—or, quicker still,  
Here's the English Can and Will!"

## III.

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;  
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they:  
Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,—  
Shall the 'Formidable' here, with her twelve and eighty guns,  
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,  
Trust to enter—where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,  
And with flow at full beside?  
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.  
Reach the mooring? Rather say,  
While rock stands or water runs,  
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

## IV.

Then was called a council straight.  
Brief and bitter the debate:  
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow  
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,  
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?  
Better run the ships aground!"  
"Not a minute more to wait!  
Let the Captains all and each  
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!  
France must undergo her fate.

## V.

"Give the word!" But no such word  
Was ever spoke or heard;  
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these  
—A Captain? a Lieutenant? a Mate—first, second, third?  
No such man of mark, and meet  
With his betters to compete!  
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,  
A poor coasting-pilot he, *Hervé Riel the Craisickese*.

## VI.

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel:  
 "Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?  
 Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell  
 On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell  
 'T'wixt the offing here and Grève, where the river disembogues?  
 Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?  
 Morn and eve, night and day,  
 Have I piloted your bay,  
 Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.  
 Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hognes!  
 Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!  
 Only let me lead the line,  
 Make the others follow mine,  
 And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,  
 Right to Solidor past Grève,  
 And there lay them safe and sound;  
 And if one ship misbehave,—  
 —Keel so much as grate the ground,  
 Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

## VII.

Not a minute more to wait.  
 "Steer us in, then, small and great!  
 Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.  
 Captains, give the sailor place!  
 He is Admiral, in brief.  
 Still the north-wind, by God's grace,  
 See the noble fellow's face  
 As the big ship, with a bound,  
 Clears the entry like a hound,  
 Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!  
 See, safe through shoal and rock,  
 How they follow in a flock,  
 Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground!  
 The peril, see is past,  
 All are harboured to the last,  
 And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"—sure as fate,  
 Up the English come,—too late!

## VIII.

So, the storm subsides to calm:  
 They see the green trees wave  
 On the heights o'erlooking Grève.  
 Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.  
 Out burst all with one accord,  
 "This is Paradise for Hell!  
 Let France, let France's King,  
 Thank the man that did the thing!"  
 What a shout, and all one word,  
 "Hervé Riel!"

# HERVÉ RIEL.

ROBERT BROWNING.

*Allegro maestoso.*

H. WALFORD DAVIES.

PIANO.  
♩ = 104.

The piano introduction consists of two systems of music. The first system features a treble clef with a melody starting on a G4 and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The second system continues the piece, showing more complex harmonic textures and a crescendo leading to a forte dynamic.

CHORUS. SOPRANO.  
ALTO. On the sea and at the Hogue, six-teen hun-dred nine-ty - two, Did the  
TENOR. On the sea and at the Hogue, six-teen hun-dred nine-ty - two, Did the  
BASS. On the sea and at the Hogue, six-teen hun-dred nine-ty - two, Did the  
On the sea and at the Hogue, six-teen hun-dred nine-ty - two, Did the

The vocal introduction for the chorus is a single system of music in the bass clef, providing a harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the vocalists.

Eng-lish fight . . the French, - woe . . to France !  
Eng-lish fight . . the French, - woe . . to France !  
Eng-lish fight . . the French, - woe . . to France !  
Eng-lish fight . . the French, - woe . . to France !

The chorus is set in 2/4 time and features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are repeated four times. The piano part includes a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking and an asterisk (\*) indicating a specific performance instruction.

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