

**LAYS OF GREAT
BRITAIN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649627202

Lays of Great Britain, and Other Poems by James W. Bailey

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Cover @ 2017

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JAMES W. BAILEY

**LAYS OF GREAT
BRITAIN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

LAYS
OF
GREAT BRITAIN,

And other Poems.

BY
JAMES W. BAILEY.

This England never did, nor ever shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them; naught shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true.
SHAKSPERE.

LONDON:
HAMILTON, ADAMS & Co., 32, PATERNOSTER ROW.

BRIGHTON:
H. & C. TREACHER, 1, NORTH STREET, AND 44, EAST STREET.

MDCCLXXII.

280 . j . 342.

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PROEM.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

SWEET HOME and LOVE man's thoughts engage
On this world's stage ;
Home happy made by soft endearing ties
Is deem'd the fairest prize !
But chiefly *thirst for power*
Doth agitate the 'creatures of an hour,'
And talents lent by heaven for good
Are exercised in deeds of tyranny and blood.
What fills the grand historic page ?
Injustice, rage !
Ever the strong his weaker brother killing,
Or burdening him unwilling.
What chief of people yet,
Of ancient times or young, have nobly set
Example, which doth not defy
The rule, which bids us do as we would be done by ?
Thus RIGHTS become the highest prize ;
And in men's eyes
Are SACRED held, where spirit lights the breast.
But evil times oft wrest
The heaven-sent boon, and now
A king unto the block his head shall bow ;
Or prostrate race, once known to fame,
Forfeit its high estate, and dwindle to a name !

As on th' Assyrian slab we see
 Old tyranny :
 The lip-held captive agonised with fright,
 And yielding up his sight,
 With suppliant hands, to hands that know
 No sense of mercy for the weak one's woe ;
 So still the bad would blind, [kind.
 Or drag, lip-held the weak ! Hence sorrow to man-

For man was born to work, not slave !
 For this heaven gave
 The sinewy arm to build the lofty fane,
 The craft that o'er the main
 Speeds the aspiring pine,
 And sun-like intellect o'er all to shine.
 Whence trampled peoples yet shall find
 That common interests all their fellow-creatures bind.

What is the spirit of this age ?
 Man's noblest rage !
 The toiling masses seek to make a home,
 And in the light to come.
 The beauteous fowls of th' air,
 The fishes of the sea have space to share :
 Shall man alone in this wide world [be hurl'd !
 Be cramp'd ? Whoso saith "Yes !" on him contempt

So forth my little book of "Lays !"
 And seek not *praise*,
 Nor anger fear ; but thy endeavour be
 To trace that *spirit free*,
 And *martial* ardour bright, [doth light ;
 Which, SPARTA'S once, GREAT BRITAIN'S soil
 And scatter *Lays of Love* behind,
 Strong sympathy which locks the breasts of human-kind.