

**THE TWENTY-FIRST OF  
OCTOBER:  
OR, THE HEROES  
OF THE DAY, A POEM**

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The twenty-first of October: or, The heroes of the day, a poem by Peter Placid

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TWENTY-FIRST OF OCTOBER:

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**A Poem.**

BY PETER PLACID.



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Mere knaves, you say! What, gentlemen like these,  
With velvet cloaks and rapiers of Milano?  
Sir, you should call such knaves Right Worshipful!

THE LORD OF PENDRAGON: A PLAY.

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LONDON:  
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.

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1845.

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TWENTY-FIRST OF OCTOBER:  
OR,  
THE HEROES OF THE DAY.

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I.

What means the sound of rushing wheels to-night?  
In coal-black Sunderland this blaze of light?  
What means the mob, that many-headed ass,  
Gaping with wonder at all things which pass?  
Ha! there's a dinner given—in solemn state:  
Doubtless, some great event to celebrate.  
Now the wine flows, the heavier labours o'er;  
The Athenæum rings with glad uproar!  
Now speeches of stupendous length are spun—  
Cheer'd at beginning, cheer'd yet more when done;  
And still the hungry multitude without  
Stand listening, or respond with feeble shout;  
Though the clouds o'er them darken, and severe  
The winds that blow upon the banks of Wear.

## II.

I know it now! October hath a day  
Whose lustre in our land shall ne'er decay;  
A day of bloody strife, a day of fame,  
Than which none brighter clings to England's name;  
And now the circling year hath brought it round,  
With all its wreaths of endless glory crown'd.  
For this, the rushing wheels; for this, the shine  
Of many lights; the banquet and the wine:  
Brave men have met, the memories to renew  
Of hard-fought Trafalgar with honours due,  
And to the warrior and the patriot chief  
Pay the just tribute of a nation's grief.

## III.

No? not for him! The feast indeed is spread,  
But not in honour of the mighty dead.  
To other heroes bows another race;  
Peace reigns,—and Gratitude were out of place.  
That peerless valour, that exalted mind,  
Which,—by the blessing of good heaven combin'd

In Nelson,—saved, perchance, the world from thrall,  
 Now in our towns men meet not to recall.  
 Creatures, more oft, who in the mire have roll'd,  
 Low grovelling souls that lick the dust for gold;  
 Now for high qualities they substitute  
 Huge wealth, and worship some egregious brute.  
 Or some gay noodle, who hath gambled deep  
 And won more money than he knows to keep,  
 They place upon a pedestal, and praise  
 His virtues—to the noodle's vast amaze.  
 Or some great block for idol set they up,  
 And to its honour drain the sparkling cup,  
 So that the block be treble gilt: they stare,  
 They bend, they crouch—to the metallic glare.  
 As the Madonna, in more southern lands,  
 The homage of unletter'd slaves commands,  
 Though carved most rudely, so she be enwrapp'd  
 In silk and samite, and superbly capp'd;  
 So stands, adored, one of your millionaires, (1)  
 Drest in the majesty of many Shares:  
 Be he a brute, a noodle, or a block,  
 Enough that he can boast of scrip and stock.