

**REFLECTIONS IN RHYME,  
ON THE WELLINGTON  
MEMORIAL AND THE  
COLUMN OF NAPOLEON**

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Reflections in Rhyme, on the Wellington Memorial and the Column of Napoleon by Arthur Wellesley Wellington

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**ARTHUR WELLESLEY WELLINGTON**

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**Reflections in Rhyme,**  
**ON**  
**THE WELLINGTON MEMORIAL**  
**AND THE**  
**COLUMN OF NAPOLEON.**

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"HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE."

HOL



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## REFLECTIONS IN RHYME.

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FRIEND of my youth, on whom, in self-mistrust,  
The Censor's office I presum'd to thrust,  
Sure, what the weak require, in you to find ;  
The taste which wounds not, and is firm, though kind.  
Nor did my friend that fearful charge refuse,  
To judge between a rhymers and the Muse ;  
If one reproving smile or slightest hint  
Would have suppress'd all vain desire to print,  
Should not determin'd praise and counsel true  
My wav'ring purpose tempt me to pursue ?      10  
Yes, I will execute the pure intent,  
Where honour's due, dishonour to prevent.  
Honour to Wellington ! I join the shout ;  
'Tis not the worship, but the form, I doubt.  
The order of the statue, and it's site,  
I question both ; 'tis every Briton's right.

Still adulation like a torrent flows,  
 And bold the man, who dares its strength oppose.  
 Lo, even now, when resolute I seem  
 To brave the buffet of this deaf'ning stream,      20  
 Muddy yet noble, — shiv'ring on its brink,  
 Though friendly hands invite me, yet I shrink.  
 Just as in early life we both have seen,  
 I on *the logs*, and you in meadow green,  
 Some timid trembler, late the nursery's care,  
 Fear the embrace of Father Thames to share;  
 But soon the training of a manly school  
 Subdues the terror of each little fool.  
 So apt to arm the critic with a sneer,  
 My very simile excites my fear.      30  
 Yet what if obvious comment I foresee,  
 Or a new *Dunciad* make a fool of me?  
 On no ignoble purpose rashly bent,  
 Cheer'd by considerate friendship's firm assent,—  
 Fleet ditch itself—the games reviv'd by Pope—  
 Ought not to balk my plunge or spoil my trope.  
 The tide flows high and strong, the bank is steep,  
 But Eton calls on Westminster to leap.  
 Hence to the winds the modest veil I throw,  
 Once more draw back, take heart, and here I go.      40



While other heroes not of royal race,  
 In bronze or marble, on their feet we place,  
 With which memorial even Nelson's shade  
 Will rest contented when the debt is paid,—  
 The friends of Wellington, outrunning Fame,  
 Equestrian statues for the living claim ;  
 And the chef-d'œuvre must rise, at their desire,  
 Where our great Captain may himself admire.  
 Were it his choice — we better know the man —  
 Let Chivalry and Taste reject the plan. 50  
 But names forget their duty to fulfil ;  
 No voice is heard from *Constitution Hill*.

Yet, did we dream ? What vision pass'd of late ?  
*Beneath* that arch, who comes in all her state ?  
 What shouts proclaim the greatest of the great !  
 As beautiful as Hope, and more serene,  
 Hail, Queen of England, and of peace the Queen !  
 Sacred to Her, in more than Roman pride  
*Above* that arch let no dictator ride ;  
 There, fix'd for ages, insolently tread 60  
 On every future king's anointed head ;  
 And, while he lives, from his triumphant seat  
 See England's Virgin pass between his feet.

Is this the project of the high-born Tory?  
 O rare conservative of England's glory!  
 Dishonour to the Crown, and manhood's shame,  
 O rare memorial of a hero's name!

Why does the Tory advocate the Horse?  
 Because it is not in the common course.

Well pleas'd if statuary laws decide  
 That only royal images may ride,  
 Therefore avowedly he seeks to grace  
 A subject's statue with a sov'reign's place.  
 By jealous hands adorn'd with decent care,  
 Has royalty a single gem to spare?  
 Of all encroachment on its rank beware!  
 Is it not wisdom so to fence it round,  
 As if the Throne were consecrated ground?  
 Beyond the pale, men reverently gaze;  
 Open a gap, and every beast may graze.  
 But then 'tis urg'd, so passing great is he,  
 England can never such another see.  
 A bold prediction! true it still may be.  
 Yet I suspect, not many years ago  
 England of Marlborough thought even so:  
 The rule, with him religiously maintain'd,  
 Has to this hour inviolate remain'd.

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Infringe it once, I bet and offer odds,  
 We shall have troops of cap'ring demigods,  
 Till soldiers hold their military vows 90  
 As due to laurel'd as anointed brows.  
 Unhorse the Duke, all future sons of fame  
 Honours withheld from him will blush to claim :  
 His intervening statue would secure  
 The precincts of the throne, while thrones endure.  
 This sober truth by loyal prudence weigh'd,  
 His Grace will never head the cavalcade.  
 But, let the marble warrior ride or not,  
 Spare living modesty, and change the spot.  
 Is it an object, that in time to come 100  
 His monument should mark his former home,  
 To raise it still forbear, before his eyes ;  
 Long be it ere his children see it rise !

Not that man's grief his judgment should mislead,  
 And render vain the glory of the dead :  
 Not for the hero and his race alone,  
 A grateful country animates the stone,  
 But, nobly selfish, makes him all her own :  
 Therefore let zeal the voice of reason hear,  
 Seek for a better site, and find it near ; 110