

**SONGS AND BALLADS, WITH
OTHER SHORT POEMS, CHIEFLY OF
THE REIGN OF PHILIP AND MARY.
EDITED, FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN
THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM**

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Songs and ballads, with other short poems, chiefly of the reign of Philip and Mary. Edited, from a manuscript in the Ashmolean museum by Thomas Wright

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CHIEFLY OF THE REIGN OF PHILIP AND MARY.

EDITED,

FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM,

BY

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CALIFORNIA

The Roxburghe Club.

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TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS

OF

The Roxburghe Club

THIS COLLECTION OF OLD SONGS AND BALLADS

IS DEDICATED AND PRESENTED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

ROBERT S. HOLFORD.

SEPTEMBER, 1860.



PREFACE.

THE celebrated antiquary, Thomas Hearne, had a custom, when he printed an old chronicle or any other historical work, of adding, under the title of Appendices or Notes, a quantity of miscellaneous matter, which had no relation whatever to the text of his book. It was thus that, in publishing an edition of the *Historia* of Gulielmus Neubrigensis, in 1719, he printed, among the materials collected together as an Appendix to his Preface, p. lxxxii., an early text of the ballad of Chevy Chace, stating that it was taken "out of an old MS. communicated to me by a learned friend." It is rather curious that Hearne should not have been aware that this "old manuscript" lay almost under his nose, for it was one of the treasures of the Library of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, marked as MS. Ashm. No. 48, and consisting of a very interesting collection of old English poetry. In 1802, when Ritson published his *Bibliographia Poetica*, he was equally ignorant of the existence of this MS., and he merely sneers at Hearne for supposing that the ballad of Chevy Chace was the work of a minstrel named Richard Sheale, whose name was attached to it, and for making him the author of several other pieces of poetry, and believing him to have been living in the year 1588; whereas Ritson declares that "the ballad is manifestly a composition of the preceding century." In the fourth volume of the last edition of Evans's *Collection of Old*

Ballads, published in 1810, a ballad "On the Murder of the two brothers Lewis and Edmond West, by the sons of Lord Darsy," is printed, in modernized orthography, "from a MS. in the Ashmole Library, Oxford."

This manuscript, indeed, appears to have been first brought to notice by Professor Conybeare, who contributed some account of it, with one or two short poems taken from it, to the thirteenth number of the *British Bibliographer*, in 1813. Since that time it has received very little attention, although it is in many respects one of the most curious collections of contemporary English poetry left us by the sixteenth century, and I feel quite sure that all who take an interest in the history of English literature will rejoice to see the whole of it in print. It is written in hands of the sixteenth century, to which, by themselves alone, it would be difficult to fix an exact date, but this date is determined by internal evidence of another description.

I have used the word in the plural, *hands*, in speaking of the writing, because the manuscript contains more than one handwriting, although the mass of the volume has been written by the same person. It is a selection of short poems most in vogue at the time, made by an individual, for some purpose or other. At folio 19 of the manuscript the handwriting suddenly changes, and is now that probably of a writer employed by the other, until folio 47, when the original writer resumes his task. At the end there are some additions in hands of a rather later date. Many of these poems have at the end names, which were no doubt those of the authors, but which are written by the hand of the copyist. I have already stated that the name of Richard Sheale is attached to the ballad of Chevy Chase, and the same name occurs at the end of several other pieces. The first of these (No. XVIII. in the present