

SONGS OF ENGLAND

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Songs of England by Alfred Austin

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ALFRED AUSTIN

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V3809

BY

ALFRED AUSTIN

POET LAUREATE

Et dubitamus adhuc virtutem extendere factis?

ÆNEID vi. 806

Why should our Future be less glorious than our Past?

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1898

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TO
FIELD MARSHAL
The Viscount Wolseley, K.P.
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

MY DEAR WOLSELEY,

A friendship of close on thirty years' standing would of itself account for my desire to tender you the dedication of this volume. But it is less with the friend than with the Soldier and the Patriot that I would fain see it associated. In days, now happily passed away, when to descant on the power and the mission of England was deemed a desecration of the Muse, and almost an outrage on morality, you invariably responded with instant sympathy to any note that vibrated with patriotic sentiment. How could it be otherwise? In your youth you fought and bled for England, and now, in riper years, you devote to her the energy of your mind and the resources of your experience. Long may you continue to do so! Never were they more needed than now, when it has devolved on her to oppose and, if needs be, to defend, her magnanimous policy of Commercial Freedom against exclusive and baneful ambitions.

Believe me, my dear Wolseley,
Always cordially yours,
ALFRED AUSTIN.

FLORENCE, February 1898.



EXPLANATORY

IN compliance with suggestions frequently received during the last two years, this volume is issued under conditions which place it within the reach, at least, of the many. It contains no pieces that are not to be found elsewhere among the author's Works, but apart from each other, and in the immediate company of other utterances of less national import. All of them, it will be observed,—not excepting "At His Grave" and "The Passing of Merlin," pious tributes to two great Englishmen,—are animated by the same sentiment, and had their origin in the same impulse, love and pride of Country. It only remains to add, in deference to certain generous and legitimate susceptibilities, that in the Sonnets, "Why England Is Conservative," the word "Conservative" is used in no Party sense, and that by "England," for which no other appellation equally comprehensive and convenient has yet been discovered, it is intended to indicate not only Great Britain and Ireland, but Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, and every spot of earth where men feel an instantaneous thrill of imperial kinship at the very sound of the Name that lends its title to the opening poem in the present volume.



The page contains extremely faint and illegible text. The content is mostly obscured by noise and low contrast. There are some faint, scattered characters and marks, but no coherent text is discernible.