

**ALNWICK CASTLE:
WITH OTHER POEMS**

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Alnwick Castle: With Other Poems by Fitz-Greene Halleck

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FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

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ALNWICK CASTLE,

WITH OTHER

P O E M S.

By Fitz-Gibbon Halliday

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ROY W. B.
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POEMS.

ALNWICK CASTLE.¹

HOME of the Percy's high-born race,
Home of their beautiful and brave,
Alike their birth and burial place,
Their cradle, and their grave !
Still sternly o'er the castle gate
Their house's Lion stands in state,
As in his proud departed hours ;
And warriors frown in stone on high,
And feudal banners "flout the sky"
Above his princely towers.

A gentle hill its side inclines,
Lovely in England's fadeless green,
To meet the quiet stream which winds
Through this romantic scene
As silently and sweetly still,
As when, at evening, on that hill,
While summer's wind blew soft and low,
Seated by gallant Hotspur's side,
His Katherine was a happy bride,
A thousand years ago.

Gaze on the Abbey's ruined pile :
Does not the succouring Ivy, keeping
Her watch around it, seem to smile,
As o'er a loved one sleeping ?
One solitary turret gray
Still tells, in melancholy glory,
The legend of the Cheviot day,
The Percy's proudest border story.
That day its roof was triumph's arch ;
Then rang, from aisle to pictured dome,
The light step of the soldier's march,
The music of the trump and drum ;

And babe, and sire, the old, the young,
And the monk's hymn, and minstrel's song,
And woman's pure kiss, sweet and long,
 Welcomed her warrior home.

Wild roses by the Abbey towers
 Are gay in their young bud and bloom :
They were born of a race of funeral flowers
That garlanded, in long-gone hours,
 A Templar's knightly tomb.
He died, the sword in his mailed hand,
On the holiest spot of the Blessed Land,
 Where the Cross was damped with his dying breath ;
When blood ran free as festal wine,
And the sainted air of Palestine
 Was thick with the darts of death.

Wise with the lore of centuries,
What tales, if there be "tongues in trees,"
 Those giant oaks could tell,
Of beings born and buried here ;
Tales of the peasant and the peer,
Tales of the bridal and the bier,

The welcome and farewell,
Since on their boughs the startled bird
First, in her twilight slumbers, heard
The Norman's curfew-bell.

I wandered through the lofty halls
Trode by the Percys of old fame,
And traced upon the chapel walls
Each high, heroic name,
From him² who once his standard set
Where now, o'er mosque and minaret,
Glitter the Sultan's crescent moons ;
To him who, when a younger son,³
Fought for King George at Lexington,
A Major of Dragoons.

* * * *

That last half stanza—it has dashed
From my warm lip the sparkling cup ;
The light that o'er my eye-beam flashed,
The power that bore my spirit up
Above this bank-note world—is gone ;
And Alnwick's but a market town,

And this, alas ! its market day,
And beasts and borderers throng the way ;
Oxen, and bleating lambs in lots,
Northumbrian boors, and plaided Scots,
 Men in the coal and cattle line ;
From Teviot's bard and hero land,
From royal Berwick's beach of sand,
From Wooller, Morpeth, Hexham, and
 Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

These are not the romantic times
So beautiful in Spenser's rhymes,
 So dazzling to the dreaming boy :
Ours are the days of fact, not fable,
Of Knights, but not of the Round Table,
 Of Bailie Jarvie, not Rob Roy :
'Tis what " our President," Munro,
 Has called " the era of good feeling :"
The Highlander, the bitterest foe
To modern laws, has felt their blow,
Consented to be taxed, and vote,
And put on pantaloons and coat,
 And leave off cattle-stealing :