

**THE MOST PLEASANT SONG  
OF LADY BESSY: THE  
ELDEST DAUGHTER OF  
KING EDWARD THE FOURTH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649436903

The Most Pleasant Song of Lady Bessy: The Eldest Daughter of King Edward the Fourth by  
Thomas Heywood

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**THOMAS HEYWOOD**

**THE MOST PLEASANT SONG  
OF LADY BESSY: THE  
ELDEST DAUGHTER OF  
KING EDWARD THE FOURTH**



THE MOST PLEASANT  
SONG  
OF  
LADY BESSY,  
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF KING EDWARD THE FOURTH,  
AND HOW SHE MARRIED KING HENRY THE SEVENTH  
OF THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER.

---

WITH NOTES  
By THOMAS HEYWOOD, F.A.S.

---

..... Sermones ego malle  
Repentes per humum.

---

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY RICHARD TAYLOR,  
AND LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

MDCCLXXIX.

929  
M915  
1829

TO  
THE REVEREND JOSEPH HUNTER, F.A.S.

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED,

AS A MARK OF RESPECT AND FRIENDSHIP.

Manchester,  
January 1, 1829.

## P R E F A C E.

---

THE following "SONG" is copied from a Manuscript in the possession of William Bateman, Esq. F.A.S. The hand-writing is of the reign of Charles the Second; the composition was probably coëval with the events it describes. The transcriber has enacted the part of translator; but the necessity for preserving the metre has compelled him to leave sufficient proofs of the age in which the poem was written. The words "commentie," "meany," "blee," "gawres," "cou'd," "liart" (gentle), and many others, but ill assort with the modern phraseology into which the ballad is for the most part rendered; whilst the manners described have nothing in common with those which obtained during the seventeenth century. The manuscript is a very slovenly performance; and notwithstanding the corrections of a cotemporary, several unintelligible passages remain, to mark the incompetency of the copyist and

of his reviser, to the task which they had undertaken.

The author betrays himself in various places (by inadvertently changing from the third person to the first) to be Humphry Brereton, one of the household of Thomas second Lord Stanley; and with Bray, Urswick, and others, employed in the negociations which preceded the return of Richmond.

The porter then in that state  
That time of the night riseth he,  
And forthwith opened me the gate,  
And received both my horse and me.  
Humphrey took the three mules then,  
Into the West wind wou'd he,  
Without all doubt at Liverpoole  
He took shipping upon the sea.  
With a swift wind and a liart  
He so saild upon the sea,  
To Beggrames Abbey in little Brittain,  
Where as the English prince did lie.  
The porter was a Cheshire man,  
Well he knew Humphrey when he him sec.  
Humphrey knockt at the gate truely,  
Where as the porter stood it by,  
And welcomed me full heartily,  
And received then my mules three.



The spelling *Bosworth* uniformly as *Bolesworth*, might have induced a suspicion that the author was better acquainted with the county of *Chester* than with that of *Leicester*; but the mode in which the porter accounts for his pleasure in seeing *Humphry*, enables us to form a probable conjecture as to the family of the ballad writer :

For a Cheshire man born am I certain,  
From the Malpas but miles three.

In the pedigree of the *Breretons* of *Shochlach* and *Malpas*, (a younger branch of the house of the same name seated at *Brereton*,) *Humphry* appears to have been the third son of *Bartholomew Brereton*, and to have lived in the reign of *Henry the Seventh*. He left three daughters; the eldest of whom marrying into the neighbouring family of *Dod* of *Edge*, her descendants still exist in the representatives of that ancient house. *Humphry* is described in the *Dod* pedigree as seated at *Grafton*, a township near *Malpas*.

The immediate reference which the "Song" bears to some of the most important points in the controversy respecting the character of *Richard the Third*,

will probably in many instances cause the question of its antiquity to be decided according to the prejudices of the reader. The editor cannot expect that Humphry Brereton will meet with more consideration than that which Walpole and his followers have allotted to the cloud of cotemporary writers who are opposed to their view of this period of English history; and the honest Cheshire squire would probably be satisfied, if his labours in any degree multiplied the difficulties of those who have sought to injure the reputation of the gentle and unhappy lady it was his fortune to serve.

The "Lady Bessy" was the eldest daughter of Edward the Fourth, by the ill-omened marriage of that monarch with Lady Grey. The princess was born at Windsor, Feb. 11, 1466, and had therefore attained her nineteenth year at the time of which the ballad treats. The life of this lady partook of the unsettled character of the age. The success of Warwick, in the rebellion of which Edward's marriage was the cause, compelled the Queen with her children to take refuge in the sanctuary at Westminster. Four years afterwards the princess was

betrothed to the Dauphin: and Louis XI., in his anxiety to procure the withdrawal of the English army, promised to conduct the bride to France at his own expense, and to allow 60,000 livres per annum for her maintenance. This article of the treaty of Pequigny was however unperformed in 1480; and to the remonstrances of Lord Howard the French king replied by a direct refusal. Edward, who in anticipation of the nuptials had already styled his daughter "the Dauphiness," sought revenge in a war with Scotland, the ancient ally of France.

The name of the princess in connection with that of the Earl of Richmond first occurs in the negotiations between Edward the Fourth and Francis Duke of Brittany for the surrender of the Earl, who had taken refuge in that sovereign's dominions. The hand of Elizabeth was then offered to Richmond, but a fortunate chance enabled him to avoid putting the King's sincerity to the proof.

Edward died in April 1483; and the four following months saw the murder of Edward the Fifth and Richard Duke of York; whilst the Queen and