

**BALLADS AND POEMS  
ILLUSTRATING  
ENGLISH HISTORY**

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Ballads and Poems Illustrating English History by Frank Sidgwick

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BALLADS AND POEMS

ILLUSTRATING  
ENGLISH HISTORY

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# BALLADS AND POEMS

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ENGLISH HISTORY

Edited by  
FRANK SIDGWICK



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## PREFACE.

A NUMBER of the poems in this book are to be found in many similar collections of historical poems, and only the limits imposed by the law of copyright have prevented the inclusion of others, such as Tennyson's *Revenge*. It is hoped, however, that this deficiency may be more than compensated by the presence of many less hackneyed poems, and in particular of several fine ballads, some of which have hitherto not been put before young pupils. While it must be admitted that these are not conspicuous for historical fidelity, I venture to think that their literary interest is a distinct advantage for educational purposes; and a word or two of guidance to teachers who use this book may not be out of place.

Firstly, every piece is meant to be learned by heart, and half a dozen at least have tunes. Secondly, the distinctions between the "artistic" poems, the traditional ballads, and the "popular" contemporary songs, should be kept clearly in the pupil's mind. Thirdly, seeing that this mixture of styles has necessitated an arrangement by chronological order of subject-matter, each piece should be so dealt with that



the pupil realises the conditions under which it was written. To this end I have added, to the notes on the "artistic" poems, short accounts of their respective authors, and have elaborated the notes on the traditional and "popular" poems and ballads. Proper handling of certain ballads will arouse interest in the methods of oral tradition. In the note to *King John and the Abbot of Canterbury* a hint, easily expanded, is given of the vogue which such folk-tales may enjoy. The poems by Hawker and Wolfe have interesting literary histories, which serve to demonstrate that "artistic" poems may occasionally undergo experiences similar to those of "popular" verse.

The best method of expounding each poem, according as it narrates, disguises, or illustrates history, will be easily decided by the teacher, who will find that the fulness or paucity of the notes is in inverse ratio to the amount of information ordinarily accessible in history-books. Etymological notes are almost entirely omitted, in the belief that interest in the growth of a language is of later development than that interest in the growth of a nation and its literature which this book endeavours to stimulate.

F. S.

*January 1907.*

## CONTENTS.

A.D.		PAGE
61	Boadicea . . . . . W. COWPER	1
1020	King Canute . . . . . W. M. THACKERAY	8
1120	He Never Smiled Again . . . . . MRS. HEMANS	8
	King John and the Abbot of Canterbury . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	9
1265	Lament for Simon de Montfort . . . . . TR. BY G. ELLIS	13
	Robin Hood and the Three Squires . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	16
	Bold Robin . . . . . T. L. PEACOCK	20
1346	Durham Field . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	23
1388	Chevy Chase . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	31
1411	The Battle of Harlaw . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	41
1415	The Agincourt Song . . . . . CONTEMPORARY POEM	45
1415	King Henry V's Conquest of France . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	46
1415	Agincourt . . . . . M. DRAYTON	49
1480	The Rose of England . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	53
1511	Sir Andrew Barton . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	58
1513	Flodden Field . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	70
1513	Edinburgh after Flodden . . . . . W. E. ATTOUN	72
1530	Dick o' the Cow . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	86
1568	Earl Bothwell . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	95
1569	The Rising in the North . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	97
1584	Mary Ambree . . . . . TRAD. BALLAD	103
158-	Brave Lord Willoughby . . . . . ANON.	106

A. D.		PAGE
1588	The Armada . . . . .	LORD MACAULAY 109
1588	The Defeat of the Spanish Armada . . . . .	ANON. 114
1595	The Fame of Sir Francis Drake . . . . .	ANON. 116
1605	Captain Ward and the <i>Rainbow</i> . . . . .	TRAD. BALLAD 116
1643	When the King enjoys his own again . . . . .	M. PARKER 120
1644	Sir Nicholas at Marston Moor . . . . .	W. M. PRÆED 122
1645	The Battle of Naseby . . . . .	LORD MACAULAY 125
1648	On the Lord General Fairfax . . . . .	JOHN MILTON 129
1650	Cromwell's Return from Ireland . . . . .	A. MARVELL 130
1652	To Cromwell . . . . .	JOHN MILTON 134
1666	The Fire of London . . . . .	JOHN DRYDEN 135
1688	The Song of the Western Men . . . . .	R. S. HAWKER 140
1689	The Burial March of Dundee . . . . .	W. E. AYTOUN 141
1702	Admiral Benbow . . . . .	ANON. 145
1704	After Blenheim . . . . .	R. SOUTHERY 147
1720	The Vicar of Bray . . . . .	ANON. 149
1773	The Boston Tea-Party . . . . .	O. W. HOLMES 152
1782	The Loss of the <i>Royal George</i> . . . . .	W. COWPER 155
1801	The Battle of the Baltic . . . . .	T. CAMPBELL 157
1805	The Happy Warrior . . . . .	W. WORDSWORTH 159
1807	Ye Mariners of England . . . . .	T. CAMPBELL 162
1809	The Burial of Sir John Moore . . . . .	CHARLES WOLFE 164
1815	Waterloo . . . . .	LORD BYRON 165
1815	England's Dead . . . . .	MRS. HERMANS 169
1837	Victoria's Tears . . . . .	MRS. BROWNING 171
1852	Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington . . . . .	LORD TENNYSON 173
1854	The Charge of the Light Brigade . . . . .	LORD TENNYSON 182
	NOTES . . . . .	185