

THE
BATTLE OF NEULAND

An Historical Ballad

In Four Parts

Hail! fruitful Isle, to thee alone belong,
Millions of Wits and Brokers in old Song.
Young.

LONDON

MDCCXC

MEMENTO

WHOEVER THINKS A FAULTLESS PIECE TO SEE,
THINKS WHAT NE'ER WAS, NOR IS, NOR E'ER SHALL BE.

Pope's Essay on Crit.

To CRITO SNEERWELL, Esq.

SIR,

*Having been prevailed on to send
the following important work into the
world, it became necessary, the better to
secure it from the jibes and jeers of the
envious, to select some great genius to
whom I might inscribe it.*

*I therefore determined to inscribe it to
YOU, who are so eminently distinguished
for that knowledge, candour and real
worth, which has so dignified your private
and literary character.*

*As some very great men will be envious
of the honour I now do you, I make no
doubt the work will receive from you, and
consequently from the world, that candour
and protection it so eminently deserves.*

I am, Sir,

With respect,

Your obedient servant,

P.W.

Several well-known circumstances which happened some years ago in the town and neighbourhood of Wakefield, gave rise to the following Ballad: The writer has only to observe, that as it was not composed with intent to give offence to any one, he hopes it will be perused with good-nature.

THE ARGUMENT

King Harry sends the Wakefield men
To fight their Newland Foes:
Sir Richard Rich doth lead them on,
But talks before he goes:
Encouraged by the maidens fair
They march in proud array,
(Their kinsfolks leaving safe at home)
To Newland wend their way.

THE BATTLE OF NEWLAND.

PART THE FIRST

When good king Henry* ruled this land
He ruled with sov'reign sway;
The like before were never seen,
Nor since unto this day.

There lived at Newland** castle strong,
Of Knights*** full many a score,
Who would not 'legiance pay the King,
Nor do him service more.

Nor was that all, for they did send
Defiance to the King,
To fight as many men as he
Into the field would bring.

*King Henry VIII A.D. 1540

**Near Wakefield, Yorkshire.

*** Knights Templars, commonly called Knights of St John of Jerusalem.

To check their stubborn high-blown pride
And make them quiet yield,
The King this letter wrote unto
The Mayor of Wakefield* .

" I charge you on your 'legiance due,
"As you shall answer me,
"Ye arm the yeomen of your town
"Without delay or fee.

"And straitway unto Newland go,
"Subdue that slavish crew
"And in what manner this is done
'ye unto me shall shew. "

The May'r forthwith together called
The townsfolks in a trice,
To know what best were to be done
In the affair so nice.

Then stept there forth a gallant Knight,
Sir Richard Rich** by name;
A nobler Knight did ne'er appear
In quest of early fame.

**Formerly a borough town.*

***Then the Chancellor of the court of Augmentations, afterwards created Lord Rich*

His father's only son was he,
Of birth and lineage high
And he with youthful ardour burnt
His skill in fight to try.

With modest, yet with manly grace
Which every heart did own,
He bowed, thus bespoke the May'r
And Yeoman of the town.

"Shall Rage and Discord rule the land,
"Shall War and Famine thrive
"While Peace and Plenty banished far,
"We scarce be left alive.

"Let not our hearts of courage fail,
"but now be firm and true;
"Let us march forth with bowmen bold
"The castle to subdue.

"Then shall our great heroic fame
"spread round through all the land,
"When gallantly we shall have fought
"At Henry our King's command:

"Besides we shall have large rewards
"In ready gold and fee;
"In English gold it will be told,
"Both men and yeomanry. "

He said- and shouts of joy were heard
Through all the town to ring;
"Long live Sir Richard Rich, " they cried,
"Sir Richard and the King;

"There's not a Knight in Wakefield town,
"Nor yet in all the land,

"So gallant as Sir Richard is,
"And he shall us command. "

Then forth appeared threescore yeomen
Young yeomen spruce and gay.
The down appeared upon their chin,
And blithe as larks were they.

In sword and cross-bow fight well skilled,
And eke in bow and arrows;
Nor were there in the north county
So famed for shooting sparrows.

With drawers and singlets lily white,
Their doublets chearful green,
With scarlet faced and silver laced,
Round hats with plumes therein.

Their bows of toughest yew were made,
Their arrows sharp and long,
And on their proud and manly thigh
A stout broad sword there hung.

Their quivers o'er their shoulders thrown
Were buckled fast before,
Their bows then slackened and unstrung
In their left hand they bore.

With flags and streamers azure blue,
Beset with lilies* gay,
And drums and trumpets, flutes and horns,
They stood in proud array.

While this prepared and resolved
To conquer or to die,
Coming to lead them to the fight
Their Captain they did spy.

**The town arms of Wakefield*

Sir Richard on a coal-black steed
With golden trappings gay,
In arms and armour bright he shone
The rival of the day.

The prancing steed well trained for war,
Nor frightened with the sword,
He champ, he foamed, and proudly neighed
Beneath his noble lord.

With shouts the heroes greet their chief,
The drums and trumpets sound;
They march: their nimble willing feet
Beat time upon the ground.

Most sure it was a gallant sight
As ever Wakefield saw,
The noble Captain and his men
All marching on a row.

And as they marched through merry Wakefield
So blithesome and so gay,
The maidens all with one accord
Most lovingly did say:

"Be stout and bold, ye merry men,
"Fight as you hold us dear;
"And if you conquer your proud foe,
"Our love ye need not fear. "

And now they march in proud array
And leave the town behind,
Gallant and gay their sable plumes
Now wantoned in the wind.

And as they marched through woods and meads
'Twas wondrous to see
The frightened kine, the bucks and does
All bounding o'er the lee.

When they in sight of Newland came,
To all men be it told.
The heroes one and all did look
More chearful and more bold.

As when the scenting hounds have found
The covert of a hare,
With savage joy the promised game
For chace they do prepare.

So did the heroes stout and bold,
Joyful their bows they strung,
The noble feats of Chevy Chace
They all in concert sung.

Here ends the first part of my song.
The battle's yet to come,

And he that dare not go to fight
E'en let him stay at home.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

THE ARGUMENT

The castle of the Newland Knights,
Their arms and horses too
Are sung-and they like trusty Knights
Stand to their leader true.

Sir Claret Vine doth lead them on:
The battle does begin;
Both Knights and Heroes, well I wis,
Do slash through thick and thin.

THE BATTLE OF NEWLAND PART THE SECOND.

Within a spacious lowly vale
Part bounded by a wood,
And other part by Calder* washed,
There Newland Castle stood.

The castle it was built most strong
With gilded turrets crown'd
So fair it seemed a palace built
Upon enchanted ground.

The Holy Knights who dwelt thereat,
For feats of chivalry
They one and all most famous were
throughout the whole country.

**River Calder*

The chief and captain of the train,
Sir Claret Vine by name,
Sir Vinyard Port the second was,
From holy land they came.

The rest from different kingdoms were
Assembled there together,
As ships into the harbour sail
To moor in stormy weather.

In armour clad from head to foot
The Knights they did appear,
And pendant from their shining breasts
A silver cross did wear.

Their right hand graspt a trembling spear,
Their left arm bore a shield,
And on their thigh a flaming sword,
They knew full well to wield.

Each mounted on a milk white steed
In silent order waits
The marching of their warlike foe,
Within the castle gates.

So silent wait the wary cats
To catch unwary food;
Nor with more dreadful silence wait
The tigers of the wood.

When Lo' upon the neighb'ring hills
Come winding thro' the wood,
The warlike foe Sir Vinyard spied,
As on the wall he stood.

Then thus unto the Knights he spake:-
"We have not much to fear,
"A Captain and but threescore men
"Do in the field appear.

"So resolute and bold a foe
"I never yet did see,
"Nor in such jocund merry mood
"As all his men and he.

"But sure they soon will graver be
"if I divine aright,
"if they with us dare to engage
"And mix in dreadful fight."

The Wakefield heroes stout and bold
Now to the castle come,
Right glad were they and eke well pleased
To find the Knights at home.

Sir Richard Rich first drew his sword
And then rode on before,

Nor stopt until he nigh had come
Unto the castle door.

Then raising on his stirrup high
He thus aloud did say:-
"In the King's name I charge you all
"That ye do me obey.

"Your castle now to me give up,
"Your goods and chattels all,
"Your arms lay down, so shall ye 'scape
"This once a dreadful thrall.

"But if your proud and haughty hearts
"Refuse the just demands,
"Without delay ye all shall feel
"The strength of our right hands

Sir Claret mounted on his steed
And brandishing his lance,
In fiance of the challenge sent
Forth forward did advance.

"Ye simple, silly, senseless race,
"Ye beardless boys," he said,
"Think you to fright us with your looks
"As you would fright a maid?

"Go get you back from whence you came, "
And keep your doors within;
"Take my advice 'tis best to sleep
"Without a broken skin.

"Yet if your little mock-fight souls
"Dare us in battle meet
"We will not take you thus at odds
"But fairly on our feet. "

He said: they one and all alight
From off their warlike steeds;
Each steed returned unto his stall,
And there in quiet feeds.

Now either foe prepared stand
The battle to begin,
Firmly resolved all to die,
Or else the day to win.

Grant me, great God of War, to sing,
Or tell me how to say,
Who in battle fought most stout
And who did run away.

Sir Claret Vine threw up his spear
As signal for the war,
And shouts from all the warriors sent
Were heard both near and far.

The Knights first on St. John did call
To aid them in the fight;
St George, aloud the heroes cried
Defend our King his right.

The Wakefield archers stout and bold
Their fury none could stay;
Full thick they did their arrows send,
Which kept the Knights at bay.

By the third flight of arrows sent
The Knights were galled so
That ten were wounded, and nine sent
Down to the shades below.

The Newland Knights their jav'lins shook,
But with bad aim they threw
Hissing they cut the liquid air,
But never a Hero slew.

Like light'ning quick the arrows flew,
The jav'lins thick were sent;
With these the Knights were galled sore,
While these in the air were spent.

With grief Sir Claret Vine he saw
His men so fast to drop;
He called Sir Vinyard to his aid
The furious foe to stop.

Their swords they from their scabbards drew
And thus aloud did cry,
"Ye Knights now let your fury burn,
"And let the wretches die."

They said; The Knights with drawn broad swords
To fight the Heroes flew;
The Heroes cast aside their bows,
Their shining blades they drew.

Now Knights and Heroes all are mixed
Promiscuous in the field,
All fight, some fly, and some pursue,
But all refuse to yield.

In all a sense of honour rise,
And every warrior warms
Amidst the danger, dreadful din,
And all the clash of arms.

So little wanton boys engage
Whole squadrons of armed wasps;
Each warrior bent on deeds of fame,
He runs, he fights, and gasps.

They closed and fought four hours long,
Nor yet could either say
(In fight they were so equal matched)
Which side would win the day.

Thus hand to hand in dreadful fight
Were mixed the warlike throng:
Which brings me about halfway through
This most heroic song.

THE END OF THE SECOND PART.

THE ARGUMENT.

The merry battle still is sung,
And many a feat is played,
No gallant hero bold doth wish
At home that he had staid.

At length the Knights they vanquish'd are,
Their castle eke is taken;
Some Wakefield Heroes bold are slain,
And some do save their bacon.

THE BATTLE OF NEWLAND.

PART THE THIRD.

Sir Richard Rich, right glad to see
The Knights so fast to fall,
To cheer his valiant warlike men
He thus aloud did call:

"Fight on, fight on, my merry blades
"Fight on as ye began;
"So from our shining bright broad swords
"Shall 'scape us ne'er a man."

The Newland Knights full vexed were,
And eke they grieved sore,
For never were they in a fight
So closely pressed before.

Sir Vinyard 'spied young Bertram out,
(A Wakefield Hero gay,

Who with his own right trusty sword
Three sturdy Knights did slay,)

The Knight he on the Hero fell,
An hour they fought full sore,
The Knight the Hero's heart blood drew,
Who word spake never more.

The Wakefield Heroes grieved sore
To see young Bertram fall,
For sure he fought this bloody day
The valiant'st of them all.

Sir Claret Vine attacked was
By three Heroes together
To brave the storm or quiet yield
The Knight he knew not whether.

The Heroes stuck so wonderous close
He could not get away,
So like a baited bull he stood
And kept the foes at bay.

At length the Knight with his broad sword
One Hero he struck down:
Another, sickened at the sight,
Fell in a deadly swoon.

The third and stoutest of them all
Fought on with might and main;
He struck the Knight upon his crest,
Which made him mad with pain.

The Knight he aimed a deadly stroke,
The Hero aimed one too,
Their clashing swords then met betwixt
And into shivers flew.

The Wakefield Hero, tired with
The labours of the day,
His back to the proud foe he turned
And nimbly tripped away.

Sir Claret Vine he with full speed
The Hero followed hard,
And thrice the flying foe pursued
All round the castle yard.

At length run down and wearied out
They came unto a tree;
The Hero claspt his arms around,
"A boon, a boon, " quoth he.

"No boon I'll grant thee, but thou shalt
"Into the river go, "
Replied the Knight, and gripped hard
By th' neck and heels the foe.

He whirled the Hero in the air
Full twelve yards high and more,
So high the like were never done
By mortal man before.

As round do turn the windmill sails
When by the tempest tost,
So turned the hero and so fast
All vital sense he lost.

Or like the fragment of a rock
By some huge giant thrown
Into the air, so up he rose,
And so he tumbled down.

And as he passed all through the air
So lightsome and so gay,
Sir Claret Vine unto the foe
Most spitefully did say:

"Thou fliest lightly, by my troth,
"Excuse my vulgar whim;
"So chuse thee, chuse thee, good fellow
"Whether thou 'lt sink or swim, "

In Calder's limpid stream he fell,
Far from the brink so gay,
The finny fry were all amazed,
And scudded fast away.

Lord what a splash the Hero made!
How did the waters fly!
Not more when Jove amongst the frogs
Their King sent from the sky.

The Wakefield Heroes saw him fall,
In haste they dragged him out;
Though sadly drenched and sore afraid
He soon grew strong and stout.

Meantime both Knights and Heroes fought,
They did so kick and cuff,
Their arms they laid about as if
They ne'er would have enough.

Thus they stormed, and fought and raged
Four hours more that day;
Who would the battle win or lose
No one not yet could say.

At length three Heroes fierce and bold
A solemn vow did make,
To lose their lives or else in fight
Sir Vinyard Port to take.

Then forth they rushed into the midst,
Where they Sir Vinyard found,
And with a deep and deadly stroke
They felled him to the ground.

As falls the stately mountain oak,
The forest's pride and King,
So fell the Knight, and with the fall
His polished arms did ring.

And frantic with his dying pain
The Knight was heard to call,
"Revenge my death upon the foe,
"Or curse light on you all. "

Sir Claret Vine, who in the fight
Had been so sore opprest,
They with a fell and fatal stab
Sent the proud Knight to rest.

The Wakefield Heroes gave a shout
Which did the Knights appal,
Their courage drooped when they saw
Their noble Captains fall.

The Heroes then upon the Knights
So close their swords were lain,
That many a valiant holy Knight
Lay gasping on the plain.

The Knights now found the Heroes would
No quarter give nor day;
"Alack!" they cried, "Not one must 'scape,
"Good lack and well o' day!"

Full sorely galled on every side
The Knights were forced to yield,
The Wakefield Heroes did remain
Sole masters of the field.

With shouts the Heroes rent the skies,
Their joy as great it were
As when the hunters have pursued
And killed the trembling deer.

Good lack, it was a piteous sight
To look upon the slain!
To see so many valiant Knights
Extended on the plain!

Of six score Knights who marched out
To brave the foe to fight,
But twenty 'scaped, the rest were sent
Down to the shades of night.

Of threescore Wakefield Heroes bold,
Who fought this bloody day,
Twice ten were wounded, five were killed,
And five did run away.

'Twas on the day of Lammas-tide
This bloody fight was won,
Nor did they end the sad day's work
But with the setting sun.

The castle doors now opened wide
And a free entrance gives.
In marched the Heroes and the place
Strait a new Lord receives.

A bloodier battle ne'er was fought
Than this, by mortal men,
Nor e'er a bloodier fight than this
Will Newland see again.

THE END OF THE THIRD PART.

THE ARGUMENT

The Knights who were in battle slain
The Heroes do entomb,
With well-earned laurels all must grant
The Heroes do go home.

The Wakefield folks well pleased are
To end the bloody strife;
King Harry says he never knew
The like in all his life.

THE BATTLE OF NEWLAND.

PART THE FOURTH.

Sir Richard bade his men to seek
Young Bertram out with care;
To inter the youth with honours due
The Heroes next prepare.

The body borne upon a bier:
A sable pall thrown o'er,

On that the bow and bright broad sword
Which he in battle bore.

Twice six young Heroes marched before,
Their arms reversed were,
Twice three support the sable pall
The rest marched in the rear.

While drums and trumpets, flutes and horns
In mournful accents sound,
Silent and sad, with solemn pace
They bore him to the ground.

"Now fare thee well!" the Captain said,
"Thy fame shall spread around,
"Whilst thy remains, O gallant youth,
"Lie mouldring in the ground. "

A more accomplished gentleman
Did Wakefield never see;
A scholar, soldier, duteous son
And sincere friend was he.

Near to a solemn lonely grove
Of beech and poplar shade,
The Heroes made one common grave,
And there the Knights were laid.

An obelisk of marble stone
Upraised thereon they place,

Awfully grand full long it stood
With ornamental grace.

In well-wrought characters of gold,
Which glittered in the sun,
The warriors next inscribed thus
The monumental stone.

"Stay passenger, whoe'er thou art,
"And look upon this stone;
"If on good errand thou art bound
"Stay not - go - quick pass on.

"But if on lawless errand bent,
"O stop, thyself to save!
"Lest thou, like us, too soon do meet
"With an untimely grave."

The news had now reach to the town
How all the Knights were slain,
And that the Wakefield Warriors were
Returning home again.

The townsfolk all with one accord
To meet them did prepare;
Without the town they happy met,
With shouts they rent the air.

They place Sir Richard in a car
Bedecked with gold around,

And with a wreath of laurel green
They next the Hero crown 'd.

Nor did the damsels of the town
Neglect their favourite dears;
A true blue knot with laurels set
Each favoured warrior wears.

The banners broad and streamers gay
First in the throng appear,
The Warriors next in order march,
Their bright drawn swords they bear.

The milk white coursers of the Knights
With flowing manes most fair,
(Next to the noble deeds of arms
Their masters chiefest care)

Were led by pages fair and fine,
And they as trophies bore
The battered helms, shields, spears and swords
The vanquish 'd Knights had wore.

Preceded by a warlike band
Of music sounding loud,
The Hero next drawn in the car
Was seen above the crowd.

Drawn by twelve strong and stout yeomen
Who laurel wreaths did wear,

And next the yeomen of the town
On horseback closed the rear.

With shouts they marched all round the town,
The merry bells did ring,
The people never were more glad
At crowning of a King.

It was resolved by them all
To send to London town
To claim the honours of the fight
And make the wonders known.

Two messengers did strait set off
All in a chariot rare,
With streamers flying at the top
Like wild beasts to a fair.

The messengers unto the King
At Court they did repair,
Where they before the King were brought
And Catherine* so fair.

They told the tidings of the fight,
How all the Knights were kill'd,
The castle taken, and that by
The Heroes of Wakefield.

Right glad to hear it was the King
As he sat in his chair,

And rising slow from off his seat
With Catherine so fair*.

Unto the welcome messengers
Who did the tidings bring
Most courteous and most graciously
Thus spoke the joyful King:

"Our thanks we send unto your town
"Your men and yeomanry;
"We have not now within our realm
"Such valiant men as ye.

**Lady Catherine Howard, Niece to the Duke of Norfolk 1540- 1541. Queen to Henry VIII, whom he married in the year 1540, in which year the order of Knights Templars was abolished by Act of Parliament.*

"So great a victory ne'er were gained
"O'er foes as this by ye;
"For ever of this gallant deed
"Witness shall Newland be.

"Were but our English subjects all
"So valiant and so true,
"We need not fear what France or Spain
"Or all our foes could do.

"The goods and chattels of the Knights,
"Their corn, their wine and oil,
"We freely give you for reward
"So fair divide the spoil. "

God save our Country and our King.

And grant that wars may cease,

That we and all good quiet folks

May end our days in peace.

THE END OF THE BALLAD.