

Classic Poetry Series

Thibaut de Champagne

- poems -

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Lady, The Fates Command

Lady, the fates command, and I must go,---
Leaving the pleasant land so dear to me:
Here my heart suffered many a heavy woe:
But what is left to love, thus leaving thee?
Alas! that cruel land beyond the see!
Why thus dividing many a faithful heart,
Never again from pain and sorrow free,
Never again to meet, when thus they part?

I see not, when thy presence bright I leave,
How wealth, or joy, or peace can be my lot:
Ne'er yet my spirit found such cause to grieve
As now in leaving thee; and if thy thought
Of me in absence should be sorrow-fraught,
Oft will my heart repentant turn to thee,
Dwelling, in fruitless wishes, on this spot,
And all the gracious words here said to me.

O gracious God! to thee I bend my knee,
For thy sake yielding all I love and prize;
And O, how mighty must that influence be,
That steals me thus from all my cherished joys!
Here, ready, then, myself surrendering,
Prepared to serve thee, I submit; and ne'er
To one so faithful could I service bring,
So kind a master, so beloved and dear.

And strong my ties---my grief unspeakable!
Grief, all my choicest treasures to resign;
Yet stronger still the affections that impel
My heart toward Him, the God whose love is mine.
That holy love, how beautiful! how strong!
Even wisdom's favorite sons take refuge there;
'T is the redeeming gem that shines among
Men's darkest thoughts,---for ever bright and fair.

Thibaut de Champagne

Pastourelle

The other day I went wandering
Without any companion
On my palfrey, thinking
To make a song,
When I heard—I don't know how—
Near a bush
The voice of the most beautiful child
That any man has ever seen;
And she was not a child,
For she was fifteen and a half years old.
I have never seen anyone
With such a noble face.
Laughing, I rode towards her
And made this speech:
'Beautiful one, tell me,
By God, what your name is.'

But she jumped up
With her crook:
'If you come any nearer,
You'll get a blow from this.
Sir, get away from here!
I don't care for a friend such as you,
And I'd rather choose
A more handsome one called Robin!'

When I saw that she was scared
So thoroughly
That she wouldn't look at me
Or give any other positive sign,
Then I began to think
How to make her
Fall in love with me
And change her mind.
I sat down on the ground beside her,
And the more I looked upon her bright face,
The more it fired my heart,
Which doubled my desire.

Then I took upon myself to ask her,
In the most beautiful terms,
To look at me
And give me a different expression.
She started to cry
And said thus:
'I cannot look at you;
I don't even know what you're after.'
I leant towards her, and told her:
'My beautiful one, by God, your mercy.'
She laughed and responded:
'You make folk scared.'

Then I took her up before me
And made straightaway
In the direction of a small, green wood.
Across the fields I saw
And heard calling out
Two shepherds amongst the wheat;
They came shouting
And raising a great cry.
And I accomplished nothing more than I have said.
I let her down and fled from there;
I didn't care for such folk.

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