Ancient Songs and Ballads, from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution

Hazlitt William Carew
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Author: Hazlitt William Carew

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Ancient Songs

and

Ballads

from

The Reign of King Henry the Second

to the Revolution

Collected by

Joseph Ritson, Esq.

Third Edition Carefully Revised by

W. Carew Hazlitt

"I love a ballad in print, 'life!"

Winter's Tale

London
Reeves and Turner 196 Strand
1877

280. 0. 117.
PREFACE.

The observation as to the scarcity of the edition of this interesting work, printed in 1790, has for some time equally applied to that of 1829; and a new impression seemed desirable.

The two volumes have undergone, on republication, such changes only as were clearly imperative, in the correction of obvious and material errors, of which the number has proved very considerable, and a few additional notes have been inserted here and there.

The Index at the end is a new and useful feature in the book; and the Glossary has been specially prepared for this edition by Mr. Sidney Hertrage, to whom I beg to express my obligations for his kindness.

W. C. H.

Kensington, January 1877.
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[TO THE FIRST EDITION.]

The favourable attention which the public has constantly shewn to works illustrating the history, the poetry, the language, the manners, or the amusements of their ancestors, and particularly to such as have professed to give any of the remains of their lyric compositions, has induced the editor to communicate a small but genuine collection of ANCIENT SONGS AND BALLADS, which his attachment to the subject had occasionally led him to form.

The reader must not expect to find, among the pieces here preserved, either the interesting fable, or the romantic wildness of a late elegant publication.* But, in whatever light they may exhibit the lyric powers of our ancient Bards, they will at least have the recommendation of evident and indisputable authenticity: the sources from which they have been derived will be faithfully referred to, and are, in general, public and accessible.

* [Percy's Reliques.]
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The Essays prefixed to the collection, and the Notes with which it is accompanied, will be found to contain some little information, of which every one may not be already possessed, and which may serve to amuse, at least, if it fail to interest.

A Glossary is subjoined, which the editor regrets his inability to render more perfect. Without other assistance, however, than what is to be scantily gleaned from a few printed books, he thinks he has a claim to the indulgence of the more critical reader; and they who have laboured in the same field, he is persuaded, will be the most ready to afford it.
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TO THE SECOND EDITION.

More than forty years have elapsed since the former impression of this singularly curious work,* which excited unusual, though not unmerited, attention on its first appearance, and has been long out of print and difficult to procure.†

The revised edition, now submitted to the candour of the public, is given, with fidelity and correctness, from a manuscript, in the editors possession, prepared, for the express purpose, by his able and industrious relative; and some of the various improvements rendering it less unworthy of approbation may, without impropriety, be noticed:—Important editions will be found in the Essays; the words abbreviated in the manuscript authorities (with which the original transcripts have, for the most part, been carefully collated), are now printed at length; the distinction or rather confusion, of u and v, and i and j, has not been ob-

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* It is dated in 1790, but was not published till two years after; though actually printed in 1787.
† [Ancient Songs and Ballads, from the reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution. London, 1829, 8vo. 2 vols.]