

BATTLE OF THE NORSEMEN AND THE GAELS.

("Accourez tous, oiseaux de proie!")

[VII., September, 1825.]

Ho! hither flock, ye fowls of prey!
Ye wolves of war, make no delay!
For foemen 'neath our blades shall fall
Ere night may veil with purple pall.
The evening psalms are nearly o'er,
And priests who follow in our train
Have promised us the final gain,
And filled with faith our valiant corps.

Let orphans weep, and widows brood!
To-morrow we shall wash the blood
Off saw-gapped sword and lances bent,
So, close the ranks and fire the tent!
And chill yon coward cavalcade
With brazen bugles blaring loud,
E'en though our chargers' neighing proud
Already has the host dismayed.

Spur, horsemen, spur! the charge resounds!
On Gaelic spear the Northman bounds!
Through helmet plumes the arrows flit,
And plated breasts the pikeheads split.
The double-axe fells human oaks,
 And like the thistles in the field
 See bristling up (where none must yield!)
The points hewn off by sweeping strokes!

We, heroes all, our wounds disdain;
Dismounted now, our horses slain,
Yet we advance--more courage show,
Though stricken, seek to overthrow
The victor-knights who tread in mud
 The writhing slaves who bite the heel,
 While on caparisons of steel
The maces thunder--cudgels thud!

Should daggers fail hide-coats to shred,
Seize each your man and hug him dead!
Who falls unslain will only make
A mouthful to the wolves who slake
Their month-whet thirst. No captives, none!
 We die or win! but should we die,
 The lopped-off hand will wave on high
The broken brand to hail the sun!