



THE HIGHWAYMAN.

A CLATTER of hoofs on the courtyard stones,
 And "Ho there, fellow! 'This horse of mine,
 Hither and hold him—and hurry your bones!—
 While I sample a quart of your master's wine."

A jingle of spurs on the sanded floor,
 The clang of a pistol fierce flung down,
 And the yokels crowd at the taproom door
 To gaze at the rider from London Town.

A deep, deep draught; the ring of a cup
 As it leaps like a flash from hand to board;
 Then a glance at the window, "The moon is up,
 And the miles are long to the Hangman's Ford!"
 A pistol jerked back to its belt once more,
 A-spin on the table a silver crown,
 A jingle of spurs on the sanded floor—
 And good-bye to the rider from London Town!

There's a withered oak at the Hangman's Ford,
 And something that hangs in the silence there,
 Pierced by the moonlight's silver sword,
 And swung by the night-wind's hempen hair.
 The traveller sleeps at the Inn on the Rise,
 For not for a gift of a kingdom's crown
 Would he pass by night and look in the eyes
 Of the reckless rider from London Town!

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