

CAVALIER POETS

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Cavalier poets by Clarence M. Lindsay

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CLARENCE M. LINDSAY

**CAVALIER
POETS**

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BY
CLARENCE M. LINDSAY

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Preface

THE Commonwealth could certainly boast of one great singer, for Milton far outshines the lesser literary lights of his age.

On the other hand the party of the King could lay claim to a goodly number of poets, of varying merit, to be sure, who appear to have been equally ready with pen or sword in support of their cause.

The Cavalier poets form a distinctive group. English literature has certainly gained much from their productions, for though their verses were not always of that solid sort as would appeal to Puritan taste, they were far from being entirely frivolous and licentious.

The Cavalier was well versed in love and gallantry, and we must of course expect to find his songs more or less tinged with the

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manners and the mode of life which were his.

In considering the licentiousness which sometimes tainted the purity of his verse, we must make allowance for the age in which he lived. Lines unfit for modern ears, would have given little or no offense in that bygone period.

There are passages in the works of Lovelace and his compeers that are to be counted among the rarest gems of verse; gems which should live even if the very names of the gallant authors be lost in the mist of years.

As to the cause for which the Cavaliers contended, we in our day, can look back and view more calmly the fierce strife between King and Parliament, when England was writhing in the throes of civil war.

But what chivalrous and generous soul will not thrill with sympathy for those doughty men, who held to their allegiance, though they might lose fortune, liberty, or even life itself in consequence.

Fearful, indeed, were the sufferings of some of these royalists at the hands of their

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enemies, and no assumed cloak of righteousness can make less odious the excesses of the party of the Parliament.

*"But, sacred Saviour! with Thy words I woo
Thee to forgive, and not be bitter to
Such as, Thou knowest, do not know what
they do."*

So wrote Charles the First during his captivity in Carisbrooke Castle, and it is well if we share his charity towards those whose efforts for reform were so stained with blood.

CLARENCE M. LINDSAY.