

THE SACRIFICE OF ISABLE: A POEM

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649761647

The sacrifice of Isable: A poem by Edward Quillinan

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

EDWARD QUILLINAN

**THE SACRIFICE OF
ISABLE: A POEM**

TO
SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART. K. J. M. P.
 &c. &c.

MY DEAR SIR EGERTON,

IN obtruding these verses upon the public, I am willing to give them the best introduction I can; and therefore I place them under your protection. Of their faults your benevolence will, I know, lead you to judge with lenity; and their more meritorious passages, if any such there be, you will estimate not only with partiality as a friend, but with enthusiasm as a poet. These lines properly belong to you, because they were written in the Library of Lee Priory—a place endeared to me by many associations, and where, through your friendship, some of the happiest hours of my life have been passed. Some persons might perhaps enquire whether I meant to include among those happy hours the time employed in a composition of so melancholy a cast as the Sacrifice of Isabel? You will not ask this question. You, as a poet, well understand how a mind accustomed to sorrowful impres-

sions, whether from constitutional susceptibility or from incidental misfortune, can find a consolatory interest in the most mournful exercises of imagination. As to the particular subject which I have selected, it is not necessary here to explain any reason that may have actuated my choice. It is an endeavour to describe, with energy and simplicity, natural feelings in trying situations. I know how difficult a task I have undertaken, and am far from having the arrogance to suppose I have succeeded in the execution. On the contrary, I certainly have not at all equalled even my own conception of what might be done with such a subject. Still, to deny that I hope I have not entirely failed, would be an affectation, of which my committing the attempt to the press, and inscribing it to you, would sufficiently convict me. But while I thus connect your name with my production, I most assuredly have not the vanity to presume that either this, or any production of which I am capable, can be worthy of the distinction.

EDWARD QUILLINAN.

London, April 1816.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN the Spring of 1814, two Strangers, a Lady and a Gentleman, were disembarked with a few domestics on a small and thinly inhabited Island in the Mediterranean, not many leagues distant from the Isle of Elba. They excited some curiosity, which was subsequently much increased by a singular occurrence that happened to them, during the Autumn of the same year, in consequence of a visit paid to the Island by Napoleon Buonaparte. A very short time ago, the gentleman having been with considerable difficulty traced to his retirement by the affectionate exertions of a brother, who had recently returned from America, was persuaded to reveal the cause which had originally led him to seek, and that which still induced him to retain, his romantic seclusion. Though he evidently laboured to command his emotion, and was not immethodical in the greater part of his narrative, yet his deportment, at some particular moments of the recital, almost indicated insanity. His story, as thus related by himself, is the subject of the following Poem.

THE
SACRIFICE OF ISABEL.

THE day approach'd, by despot rage decreed,
To see a fair and royal victim bleed.
The bigot monarch, captive to the Gaul,
Had borne unmov'd the weary days of thral;
Unrous'd to wrath while Battle's distant yell
Told how for Him a struggling people fell;
But when that people burst Invasion's yoke;
Redem'd their soil; their Monarch's fetters broke;
And bore him back in triumph to the throne,
Whence the dull wretch to be a slave had flown;
Then the loos'd Savage, as a kingly need,
Gave their best blood to bathe the land they freed.

That Tree of Liberty, they strove to rear,
He thought to wither with the deeds of fear,
Vain Man! such tree more hardily will bud,
When cruel kings maintain its roots with blood.

Of all adjudg'd, for patriot perils dar'd,
The chain, the galley, or the block's reward,
Mark'd for the last, Ramiro's noble name
Was most familiar to the tongue of fame,
Not his a breast where feeling calmly beams;
Whate'er he felt, he felt in mad extremes.
Proud as the war-horse, and more wildly fierce,
Where his hate fell, his vengeance there would pierce,
Breasts that are cast in Nature's common mould
Can but, at once, one ruling passion hold.
If two start up, the weight of one will fail,
And that or this preponderate the scale.
But some men scorn this absolute control
Of one imperious passion o'er the soul,
Them with like force e'en rival passions move:
He that can hotly hate can madly love,

Ramiro loved. His lofty hope aspir'd
To wed the royal nymph by royal eyes desir'd.
Such whisper'd tale at least had gain'd repute,
With rumour join'd of his rejected suit.
And sure, if true, the wonder were not great,
So bright a maid should shun so dark a mate.
Love, as it fairest buds in Beauty's breast,
Is a soft blossom, easily oppress'd ;
A flower so finely, delicately sweet,
'T will rarely live in close and stormy heat.
But gentle arts, and unimpatient care,
Must guard the pure fresh elegance there.
Like the young myrtle, emblem of its kind,
It must be shelter'd from the boreal wind ;
Fed with the fostering dew of tender sighs,¹
And the clear sunshine of unclouded eyes.

When war had ceas'd, Ramiro scarcely saw
The King turn'd tyrant, ere he spurn'd his law.
Proscrib'd, rebellion's standard he unfurl'd,
And, for his Sovereign's threats, defiance hurl'd :

Till, in the toils surpris'd, his forfeit life
Was sentenc'd as the penalty of strife,
But, on the eve of his appointed doom,
There broke a light upon his prison's gloom ;
There came a voice, in terror's hurried key,
That bade him rise, rush forward, and be free,
He rose, and in his strange preserver view'd
The noble maid to whom his vows had sued.
Whether mere pity urg'd her for his lot,
Or Fame was false that said she lov'd him not,
In that bright form his guardian genius came,
And work'd his rescue from the death of shame,
He fled: but when the raving monarch sought
By whom the bold deliverance was wrought,
She dared the venturous deed her own aver,
Too greatly just to let infliction err.
Blind to the worth of candour so sublime,
Truth, in the tyrant's thought, but swell'd the crime,
And deaf to kindred's, deaf to honour's call,
He doom'd the generous Isabel to fall.