

## Before.

Our Wherwell as it doth appeare  
In chronicle & ancient story  
Hath witnessed many a deed of fear  
And dread encounters grim & gory.

Our history from one cruel fact  
Takes its beginning, & ere long  
Follows another awful act  
As wrong will ever bring forth wrong.

They tell us too of battles stern  
Betwixt the Saxon & the Dane,  
And later how a king did burn  
The nuns within the holy pane  
Of our fair abbey; - yet from the brood  
Of savage crimes & evil ways  
Through many a holy abbess good  
Came forth sweet peace & prosperous days,  
Man's folly, wrath & wickedness  
Changing at last to Blessedness.

Here on this pleasant stage of green  
We set our momentary scene  
And shine to pass a summers day  
Presenting in our humble play  
A counterfeit of ancient days  
With other folk & other ways.

First of Elfeda cruel dame  
We show the fierce & awful tale  
Who wrought full many a deed of shame  
And then repentant took the veil  
Founder of that fair abbey here  
That green & flourisht many a year.

The Play begins, & so forth five ear  
To the scene that shall appear

Before 2

One treachery another brings  
They play with fire who cozen kings;  
And ladies - who their lords betray;  
May seem to triumph for a day,  
Yet mark my tale; ere all is done  
Bitterly ends each crime begun

Hear further then: - How Earl & King  
Set forth upon a fair morning  
A-hunting in the forest green  
That men call Harewood still ween

They hunt & they hallooed long  
Through chase, - & leafy glades among  
And many a noble buck they slew  
Ere one great stag they <sup>had</sup> ~~did~~ in view  
Which led them to a hollow dell

Deep in the wood. - Ye know it well  
Men name it now as Deadmans Place  
And what befel - alas! alas!

'Tis ours to show  
In him it won a name so black  
We bid you know

Before

Ambition's tree has taken root, 3  
And soon will bear its poisonous fruit  
Seeming success brings on more crime  
And violence darkens still my rhyme.

Know then, Elfrida, Edfa's queen  
Full many a year of pomp hath seen.  
But now a widow, each sad hour  
She mourns the loss of former power.

Her stepson Edward fills the throne  
But the boy Ethelred's her own  
And eagerly she plots by sin  
That throne for Ethelred to win.

'Tis done - The young king Edward's slain,  
Triumphant she is in power again -  
But mighty is the fall of Pride. -  
The angry people cast aside  
Their wretched queen, at Amesbury shall dwell  
In solitude. The rest the players tell.

Before he

by

Elfadas tale is ended - An ancient lays  
Tell how she dwelt, a penitente  
In this fair abbey which she caused to rise  
Where ym. my hearers stand - at last, tis said -  
After long years & being very old - & weak  
With weight of years she fell by chance  
Into this stream which flows before our feet.  
And falling so was drowned. ---

T was long ago - a thousand years ago,  
And be it as it may this much is sure  
That full six hundred years the abbey stood  
Bringing prosperity & blessing  
To her well village & its happy folk

Therefore we set before ym now a scene  
Of later days, when Henry the third was king,  
Where ym shall see the abbey in its prime  
Rules by the pious <sup>abbess</sup> ~~abbey~~ of the time.

Before 5

5

Thus many prosperous years befell  
Each abbess rules both long & well.  
Till sad <sup>happenings</sup> ~~misfortunes~~, cruel foes,  
Brought her high fortune to a close.

Our next shall show how they stern  
Destroyed the abbey in its turn  
With many another noble place  
Where of there scarce remains a trace.

A mighty ruin here & there  
Marks where the noble houses were.  
Beneath whose shadow lives & died  
The people of the country side.

But we must on. This brief sad scene  
Tells of the fancies that have been.

So much for sadness & grief  
and now in an episode brief  
I'll tell ~~the~~ story — Both funny & scary  
By way of comic relief =

It seems that once upon a time  
When fairy tales were in their prime  
A toad — once hatched an egg of death  
And from it came a evil leech  
A remarkable creature of hideous feature  
With the head of a cock & dragon tail  
Enough to make a horse look pale,  
They thought it didn't look very nice  
And they gave it the name of Cochatice

Now when it grew up it took to scouring  
The country round, & began devouring  
The mice & the rats — the dogs & the cats =  
And then the little boys & girls  
With nice blue eyes & golden curls.  
It even managed a full grown man  
And then the murmuring began.

How it was slain by a lad named Green  
Is the subject of our final scene.