

Thomas Moore (1779-1852)

3 *The High-Born Ladye*

In vain all the Knights of the Underwald wooed her,
Tho' brightest of maidens, the proudest was she;
Brave chieftains they sought, and young minstrels they sued her,
But worthy were none of the high-born Ladye.

“Whosoever I wed,” said this maid, so excelling, 5
“That Knight must the conqueror of conquerors be;
“He must place me in halls fit for monarchs to dwell in; —
“None else shall be Lord of the high-born Ladye!”

Thus spoke the proud damsel, with scorn looking round her
On Knights and on Nobles of highest degree; 10
Who humbly and hopelessly left as they found her,
And worshipt at distance the high-born Ladye.

At length came a Knight, from a far land to woo her,
With plumes on his helm like the foam of the sea;
His visor was down — but, with voice that thrilled thro' her, 15
He whispered his vows to the high-born Ladye.

“Proud maiden! I come with high spousals to grace thee,
“In me the great conqueror of conquerors see;
“Enthroned in a hall fit for monarchs I 'll place thee,
“And mine thou 'rt for ever, thou high-born Ladye!” 20

The maiden she smiled, and in jewels arrayed her,
Of thrones and tiaras already dreamt she;
And proud was the step, as her bridegroom conveyed her
In pomp to his home, of that high-born Ladye.

“But whither,” she, starting, exclaims, “have you led me? 25

“Here’s naught but a tomb and a dark cypress tree;
“Is *this* the bright palace in which thou wouldst wed me?”
With scorn in her glance said the high-born Ladye.

“T is the home,” he replied, “of earth’s loftiest creatures” —
Then lifted his helm for the fair one to see; 30
But she sunk on the ground — ’t was a skeleton’s features,
And Death was the Lord of the high-born Ladye!

(From *Thomas Moore’s Complete Poetical Works*. Collected by
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