

## “OLD SCHOOL”

Scotch James king, in years that reeked gunpowder;  
Shakespeare singing ; Raleigh not ready for the block.  
The tortured century's murmurs low, and loud, and louder,  
And no landfall yet at Plymouth Rock.  
Scholarly Stradling, careful benefactor  
Endows with sparing gold his little school—  
With spade and adze and chisel then, his artisan contractor  
Works that reluctant boys may learn the Golden Rule.

Raleigh condemned, with thirty days remaining  
Ere sharp-edged physic cure his ills for aye :  
Young Seys declaims his Latin, orator attaining  
At fourteen years, the name he keeps today.  
These were our early days, a school's begetting ;  
Strong links forged, letters writ to last.  
These were the builders, true foundations setting  
Ten famous generations past.

Beak-nosed Jenkins, peasant of ambition,  
England-bound for Oxford in the year that Strafford died,  
Finds, by his merit, rank and high position ;  
Who grudges him that backs a winning side?  
Civil war, and merry monarch, Jeffreys, blood, and treason—  
Judge, Principal, Ambassador, he knew them all.  
He founded us anew, that stormy season ;  
The School must stand, though Catholic James should fall.

Powdered wig, choleric, sage of moods and tenses,  
Clerk in Holy Orders, Jerseyman Durel  
Reigns, in a halcyon age, in “Schola Boviensis”  
—He coined the name, his Golden Book can tell.  
Huddled in the Schoolroom, blowing frozen knuckles,  
Fearful of the smallpox, deader than alive,  
Numb toes aching in the shoes with silver buckles,  
Our boys were talking of the Forty-Five.

Brunel is building bridges, the “North Star” steaming ;  
History in the melting pot ; Progress reigns.  
Dynamic Victorian, Arnold is a-dreaming ;  
Bessemer and Marx are forging modern chains.  
Young bloods at Public School, frock-coated, sport moustaches—  
Rugby football, Science ; Cowbridge learns the trend.  
Nineteen-Fourteen's Bank Holiday, the sunny mirage crashes ;  
The myth, the glory, meet their muddy end.

End? No, for old tradition lingers;  
Past time is ever sure, though days dawn new.  
Turn back the tattered page with youthful fingers,  
Its lasting message shall not fail in you.  
But let our old foundation hold and cherish  
Tales that the long, slow years have told;  
Time's teasing paradox need never perish—  
An ancient place, where even youth is old.

IOLO DAVIES.

