



*Ad Fontem Drogonis (Lockswell Spring) 1822*

Ad Fontem Drogonis (Lockswell Spring)  
Pure font, that welling from this airy hill  
Dost wander forth into the nether vale,  
Thou to the passenger dost tell no tale  
Of other years, but this, continuing still  
Thy secret way, a lone, unnoticed rill,  
And almost silent as the clouds that sail  
Above thee, calm, and reckless noise  
The changing world may keep, dost onward glide;  
But could'st thou speak to the grey clouds that ride  
'High o'er thy lowly track, of hadst a voice  
Like him, the Preacher in the wilderness.  
Yes, thou should'st say to all, - "That mortal pride  
Fleets like the passing rack, but not the less  
Virtue and wisdom shall, like thee, abide".

Say more - "Time was, when from this wild'ring wood,  
Tower, pinnacles and battlements arose  
Clustering, and the die bell at evening's close  
Sounded afar; for here secluded stood  
Matilda's earliest Abbey\*- mark the spot -  
Here, where no turmoils of mankind intrude,  
It rose - it vanish'd - and deep solitude  
Possessed the woods again; - old time forgot, -  
Hast'ning to further spoil, its place and name;  
Since then, e'en as the clouds of yesterday,  
Seven hundred years have well nigh passed away,  
But my pure fount, through changing years the same,  
Though the tall towers that graced its hulled side  
Left not a wreck, and mortal music died  
Still lifts its 'small still voice' like penitence  
Or humble praise.  
Thou pass, admonished, hence,  
Happy, thrice happy, if, through 'good or ill',  
Christian, thy heart responds to my forsaken rill".

William L Bowles

\*The Abbey at Lockswell, founded by the Empress Matilda and her son (afterwards King Henry II) before it was removed to Stanley, in the parish of Bremhill, was here situated.

An examination of the original grants has now, for the first time, after so many centuries, established, beyond a doubt, the name and place of the first Abbey, where this remarkable spring, anciently called Drogonis fons, from Drogonis the Chamberlain (Cameranio) of Matilda, has its rise in the wildest part of the forest of Chippenham.

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